

**A HISTORY OF
THE GERMAN *NOVELLE***

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A HISTORY OF THE GERMAN *NOVELLE*

FROM GOETHE TO THOMAS MANN

BY

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To
ELLA, HAROLD
AND
JOACHIM

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INTRODUCTION

This book is concerned with the history and development in German literature during the nineteenth century of a specific literary form or genre: 'die Novelle'. We have no exact equivalent for the term in English. The English word 'novel' corresponds to the German 'Roman'. And though there may be a few narrative works in German about which opinion is uncertain whether they should be called Roman or Novelle, the Novelle is substantially a different form from the Roman, is subject ideally to different laws of composition and aims at other aesthetic effects. But not only does the Novelle differ from the Roman in composition and aesthetic aims, it differs also from the Erzählung (tale), the Anekdote (from which however it would appear to have developed) and from the Märchen (the fairy tale). That it is regarded by German critics as different in form from the 'short story' is shown by the distinction drawn by Richard M. Meyer in his work, *Die Weltliteratur im 20ten Jahrhundert*, according to which the 'short story' is a more modern development of the Novelle, and has two main high points of interest, whereas the Novelle has only one. Arbitrary and untenable as this distinction appears, it may serve to show the care which is taken to delimit the characteristics of the various subordinate literary genres.¹ The Novelle is a special kind of prose narrative of which one of the characteristics at least is a very careful artistry in its presentation.

I shall attempt in the first chapter, before tracing the historical development of the Novelle in German litera-

ture, to arrive at some sort of definition of the genre as such, basing myself upon the writings of German critics and poets and selecting from the innumerable pronouncements upon the subject those which seem to be of most importance. A very comprehensive account of the attempts made to define the nature of the *Novelle* as a literary genre is given in the first chapter of Arnold Hirsch's book *Der Gattungsbegriff 'Novelle'* (Germanische Studien, Heft 64, Berlin, 1928) to which I am indebted for much valuable information. So far no comprehensive history of the *Novelle* in German literature has appeared either in England or Germany.

The history of a literary genre is not the mere enumeration of the writers who have cultivated that genre, brief biographical notes about them, followed by a synopsis of their various works. It involves an investigation into the origin of the genre, an attempt to account for its emergence at a given period, its basic types, possibly in the literature of another country from which it is taken over, the changes and modifications which it undergoes, as the result of various influences, such as the personality of the writers who employ it, the prevailing literary fashions, the sociological tendencies or philosophical currents which affect the thought and attitude to life of successive generations. The genre is regarded as an organism which contains within itself possibilities of development, and the history of the genre must show how far and in what way these possibilities have been realized. These are the lines upon which this investigation has been carried out.

It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that the word 'development' is not used in the sense of improvement or advance towards perfection, but signifies merely the

modifications which the term undergoes under the influence of the forces above mentioned. It is of course possible that the history of a literary genre will reveal an increasing improvement in the use of the form, so that in the works of a given author or group of authors the form will appear to have attained a maximum of effectiveness beyond which no further progress seems possible or at least beyond which none can be recorded. Thus in tracing the development of the German Ode it is permissible to say that, proceeding from the Middle Ages, when the Ode first enters German literature from Latin sources, a gradual development—in the nature of a greater poetical effectiveness—can be traced which reaches one climax in Klopstock and a second, heightened one in Hölderlin, after which no further achievements of equal value can be recorded.² Or in tracing the development of the German novel (Roman) it can be said that the novel as a genre develops during the seventeenth century under the influence of foreign models without attaining to any really independent form of its own; that in the eighteenth century it follows a parallel development under the influence of different models; and that at the end of the century it suddenly reaches its climax in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, since when it has nothing of greater importance to register. Though it might be added that *Wilhelm Meister* establishes the 'inner form'—that of the *Erziehungsroman*—for the majority of important novels which have been written in Germany since.

In this account of the history of the *Novelle* in German literature I have attempted to show its development from its Romance origins to a specifically German form which finds its most effective expression in a group of writers

in the middle of the century of whom Gottfried Keller is the most eminent. Later writers in their treatment of the genre seem to me to have failed to achieve the same maximum of effectiveness, and the modifications which they have introduced have tended with few exceptions to undermine the specific form which had been slowly evolving in the course of the century. That the feeling exists with certain writers who are sensitive to the requirements of form, that the German *Novelle* has come to the end of its development, is indicated by the fact that a definite attempt has been made in various quarters to revert to the original Romance form.

Since there is no equivalent in English for the word 'Novelle' I have throughout adhered to the German word, printing it as a German word with a capital letter in order to avoid confusion with the English word 'novel'. I have likewise retained the German expressions: *Stimmung*, *Bürgertum*, *bürgerlich*, *Bauernstum*, *Bauernstand*, for which English equivalents, where they exist, are misleading. In particular the quasi-English terms *bourgeoisie* and *bourgeois* have had to be discarded as translations of *Bürgertum* and *bürgerlich*, since they fail to give the meaning which attaches to the German words. For the German expression 'Rahmennovelle' or 'Rahmengeschichte' I have used, for lack of a recognized English literary equivalent, the term 'framework Novelle' or 'Novelle with a framework'. Quotations from foreign critical works are usually given in translation in the text. In nearly every instance the reference to the original quotation will be found in the notes.

I have restricted myself to an account of works of outstanding excellence or such as reveal some characteristic

quality. It is impossible to enumerate the vast number of writers who have written competent Novellen which neither show marked originality nor contribute to the development of the genre. And this holds good especially of more modern writers, with regard to whom I have further restricted myself to those whose literary reputations were already established before 1920.

I owe a debt of gratitude, which I gladly acknowledge, to the following: to Geheimrat Professor O. F. Walzel of the University of Bonn, for his great kindness in placing the library of the Germanistisches Seminar at my disposal; to Professor G. Hübener, likewise of the University of Bonn, in particular for one most fruitful suggestion; to Fräulein Dr Etscheid and to Hellmuth Jäsrich for the stimulus derived from discussion of my subject with them; to my sister, E. N. Bennett, for her help with the index and the preparation of this book for the press; and to my friend and colleague, Dr Joachim Rosteutscher, for invaluable criticism and suggestion.

E.K.B.

St Valentine's Day

1934

Chapter I

THE NOVELLE AS A LITERARY GENRE

The attempt to define a particular literary genre presents two difficulties and dangers: to restrict it to certain very definite characteristics and to insist that these are essential to the genre necessarily involves the exclusion of a large number of works which are usually regarded as belonging thereto; to establish a formula, on the other hand, which covers all the various examples usually included in the genre is to widen the definition to such an extent, leave it in such general terms, that it will cease to be an exact definition altogether. A minimum of definition, to be elaborated in the course of this survey, is the following: a *Novelle* is a narrative in prose, usually shorter than a novel, dealing with one particular situation, conflict, event, or aspect of a personality; it narrates something 'new' in the sense of something unusual or striking. The shortness of a *Novelle*, indeed of a short story, is a very relative matter. Storm's *Späte Rosen* occupies a few pages; Tieck's *Der junge Tischlermeister* over four hundred. Both of them claim to be *Novellen*. The most that can be said on this score is that the *Novelle*, because it does restrict itself to one centre of interest, tends to be shorter than a novel, which has many.

The aim of the present chapter is to establish a definition of the *Novelle*, which will serve as a basis for a description of the development of the genre during the nineteenth century. A twofold method of investigation is possible: to ask whether the genre as such possesses

certain inherent characteristics *a priori* which determine its essential nature: to arrive at a definition by tracing historically the origin and development of the genre. The first method may or may not yield important results. But there is always the danger of importing into an *a priori* definition characteristics which have in fact been obtained from a consideration of actual examples of the genre. It may, however, be said that with regard to many genres the specific quality is not merely in the form but also in the subject matter;¹ that certain subject matters seem to be specially suited for certain definite forms. Thus a given idea might seem to the poet to demand treatment in sonnet form. The ordinary reader gives expression to a similar belief when, hearing an anecdote from actual life, he exclaims: 'What a subject for a short story!', signaling thereby that he recognizes both the suitability of a certain subject matter for a particular literary form, and also, however vaguely it may be, the characteristics of that literary form.² Such an exclamation on his part is of course no proof of the *a priori* essential nature of the genre in question. It may and probably does merely signify that from his acquaintance with a large number of short stories he has obtained a certain impression of what a short story should be, and that the anecdote in question seems to him to be likely to provide something similar if subjected to literary treatment.

All literature can be divided into three basic genres: the epic, the lyric, the drama, each of which has certain inherent characteristics which determine its form; and though there may be lyrical dramas, and dramatic epics, yet there is no difficulty in assigning any individual work to one of the three categories. But within these basic

categories the difficulty of subdivision is considerably greater. What for instance are the exact distinctions between an ode, a hymn, a song—all subdivisions of lyrical poetry? Or within the sphere of epic literature how is it possible to say where a *Novelle* ends and a novel begins; or when a work must strictly be called a *Novelle* and not rather a tale? The three basic genres correspond to something fundamental in the relationship of the poet to the world outside of himself: they exhaust all possible relationships between poet (subject) and world (object).

(1) The objective world is absorbed in the subjectivity of the poet, so that the dualism between the poet (subject) and the world (object) ceases to exist: lyric poetry.

(2) The subjectivity of the poet is absorbed in the objectivity of the world: dramatic poetry. Every character in the drama may be a part of his ego, through all of them his ego speaks, but his ego as a whole never appears.

(3) The relationship between the subjective poet and the objective world is represented as existing, the presence of the two factors, the contact between them is apparent: epic poetry.³

That is to say, in all epic poetry we are aware of that which is told and of the teller of it; and the relationship between the two is of course capable of infinite variations and modifications. In pure lyric poetry all that is sung or said is part of the poet himself; in dramatic poetry the poet disappears entirely behind the characters which he has created. But in epic poetry the poet and the world which he is creating are both present to our consciousness; and it is part of the charm of epic and narrative literature generally that we are again and again reminded

of the person of the narrator. Often indeed, especially in Novellen, the teller of the story appears as a definite character within the narrative, a method of composition to which the term Rahmen- (framework) technik is applied.

In the seventh chapter of the fifth book of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* Goethe sets up the following distinction between the drama and the novel: 'Im Roman sollen vorzüglich Gesinnungen und Begebenheiten vorgestellt werden; im Drama Charaktere und Taten... Der Romanheld muss leidend, wenigstens nicht im hohen Grade wirkend sein; von dem dramatischen verlangt man Wirkung und Tat'. That is to say, the drama deals primarily with characters and the deeds which are the outcome of those characters; whereas the novel deals primarily with events as something which befalls, happens to persons—coming from outside upon them, not arising from within them. The hero of the drama is more active, the hero of the epic more passive. These characteristics of the novel are particularly noticeable in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* itself. Here the hero is almost entirely passive—the meeting with the troupe of actors, the adventure in the wood, the experiences at the count's castle—all are things which happen to the hero from without. If this be true of the novel it is even more true of the Novelle—at least it is revealed in a more striking form. For the manifold events of the novel are concentrated in the Novelle in one definite, striking, fateful event, which befalls a certain person or group of persons: an event which is often of supreme importance in the life of the person concerned, and always of so much importance that the narration of the changes which it produces in his life seems to

the poet worth recording. Thus in Kleist's *Novelle*, *Michael Kohlhaas*, the hero's horses are taken from him and justice is refused him. Out of that event which befalls him is developed the whole action of the *Novelle*. The event need not be a tragic one nor lead to tragic consequences. Humorous *Novellen* and *Novellen* with a happy ending are as legitimate a form as those which move towards a tragic conclusion. In Keller's *Novelle*, *Kleider machen Leute*, the fact that he is mistaken for a nobleman brings about a change in the fortunes of the tailor's apprentice which ultimately leads him to happiness and fortune. This *Novelle* again affords a good example of the passivity of the hero. Far from setting out to deceive, he resists at first the unmerited honours which are thrust upon him but then yields to the force of circumstances which shape his future fate.

By its concentration upon one event as coming from without and striking into the life of a person or group of persons like a flash of lightning—not as the outcome of their characters but as something which befalls them—the *Novelle* presupposes an irrationalistic view of life. It is a presentation not of character as fate as in the drama, but of chance as fate. And thus a modern critic, von Lukaács, can describe it: 'Das Wesen der Novellenform ist kurzgefasst: ein Menschenleben durch die unendliche sinnliche Kraft einer Schicksalsstunde ausgedrückt'.⁴

Though it can hardly be maintained that the *Novelle* is an inevitable literary genre *a priori*, yet the fact is significant that by its very insistence upon the one event which, in order that it should be worth narrating, produces a great change in the life and fortunes of the hero, it tends at least to express a certain view of life, which

may be described as fatalistic; and that its inner form at least is conditioned by the fact that it has to show that that which on the surface is chance is in reality fate.⁵ For this very task are demanded a great severity and economy of form, which are characteristic of the Novelle. The novel can in comparison with the Novelle allow itself a great deal more freedom of movement. It presents a succession of events which affect the development and fate of the hero. The Novelle, by its concentration upon one, restricts itself to just those aspects which are immediately connected with the one event. The novel, to describe it graphically, advances in a definite direction from one point to another. The line along which it moves need not be absolutely a direct one, and indeed rarely is; it can twist and turn, pause, spread itself out, loiter, only its general direction must be towards the point which is its aim. Compared with this the Novelle is a circular line moving round a fixed point, of which centre it must not lose sight until the circle is completed.

If the Novelle be compared with the tale, it will be seen that the difference between the two genres consists in the presence of this one centre of interest in the Novelle which is not essential to the tale. The form of the tale is indeed merely that of a short novel: a proceeding from one given point along a more or less direct path to another. A tale like a novel can narrate the life history of a single person; so indeed can the Novelle. But the Novelle will narrate the history of the hero's life in relation to some central point or situation. An instance is furnished by one of the finest Novellen in German literature, *Die Judenbuche* by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. This Novelle narrates the life of the hero Friedrich Mergel from his

birth until his death, but always in relation to the one action which forms the core of the Novelle: the murder of the Jew. The twenty-five years during which he lived in exile are passed over in a paragraph, because they stand in no sort of relationship to the central event. In a novel or tale they would have been at least of equal importance with the childhood or the last days of the hero.

In the following pages various other aspects of the Novelle, as presented by different critics, are enumerated chronologically, with the intention of obtaining a definition of the genre from a consideration of the views of writers contemporary with the actual authors of Novellen to be later discussed. Friedrich Schlegel in his *Nachrichten von den poetischen Werken des G. Boccaccio* (1801) is the first theoretical writer on the Novelle in German literature. He describes it as an anecdote, a hitherto unknown story, which must be able to arouse interest by itself, without reference to the ordinary course of human culture and history. It is as it were a story torn away from any cultural background. And since it has to dispense with this background, which would lend significance to it, and nevertheless aims at arousing the interest of the audience, it must contain in its form something striking and attractive. This interest may be aroused for an anecdote, which is a mere nothing in itself, by the art with which the narrator presents it. Schlegel points out the possibility of retelling and remodelling already known stories in such a way that they acquire the charm of novelty; and hints that here the personality of the narrator may be the real attraction: 'To what narrator of individual stories without inner connection, either historical or mythical, should we listen for long, if we did not begin to take an

interest in the story-teller himself?' The attitude is characteristic of the Romantic exploitation of the subjective even in a genre which in some respects is intensely objective. And he proceeds: 'The Novelle is particularly suited to present a subjective mood and point of view, indeed the profoundest and most peculiar, indirectly and as it were symbolically and especially adapted to this indirect and hidden subjectivity because it tends greatly to the objective'. That is to say, by the very objectivity with which it narrates an event, it supplies the poet with an opportunity of expressing his own subjective feelings in such a way that they are not obviously laid bare. As an illustration of this apparently paradoxical state of affairs from actual examples, Goethe's own Novelle may be cited. Gundolf denies that it is in any sense the expression of a subjective experience, and describes it as merely an example of Goethe's technical ability and desire to create an example of a given form.⁶ Superficially it does not appear to be in any sense a part of his great confession, yet he himself said of it: 'Man fühlt es der Novelle an, dass sie sich vom tiefsten Grunde meines Herzens losgelöst hat';⁷ and anyone who reads it through with care will easily recognize the elements of personal experience which are concealed in it. The same thing is true of Kleist's Novellen: beneath the matter-of-fact narration of the horrors which form the subject matter of Kleist's stories, vibrates his whole desperate uncertainty and questioning attitude to life, no less than beneath the action of his dramas. Again the historical Novellen of C. F. Meyer, which would appear to represent a maximum of objectivity, are another instance of the truth of Friedrich Schlegel's statement, Meyer himself having

written of them: 'Je me sers de la nouvelle historique purement et simplement pour y loger mes expériences et mes sentiments personnels, la préférant au *Zeitroman*, parce qu'elle masque mieux et qu'elle distance davantage le lecteur'.⁸ Friedrich Schlegel proceeds further in his definition of the *Novelle*: 'And though it tends to define the particulars of locality and costume with precision, it is content to do so in general terms, in accordance with the rules and habits of thought of a cultivated society, in which it (the *Novelle*) has its origin and home'.⁹ The point which Schlegel makes here that the *Novelle* is at home in a highly cultivated society and has its origins in such a sphere is stressed also by Goethe. Finally Schlegel describes the symbolical *Novelle* as the summit and the real flower of the whole genre.¹⁰

The next attempt at a definition of the *Novelle* to be considered is that given by Goethe in a conversation with Eckermann in 1827 in which with commendable terseness he describes it thus: 'Was ist eine *Novelle* anders als eine sich ereignete, unerhörte Begebenheit?' (an event which is unheard of, but has taken place). 'This conception of it is the real one, and many a work which passes in Germany under the title *Novelle* is not a *Novelle* at all, but merely a tale or what else you like to call it.'¹¹ It will be observed that Goethe, true to his distinction between dramatic and epic, describes the *Novelle* as a 'Begebenheit'. With regard to the two descriptive words, 'eine sich ereignete Begebenheit' would seem to suggest that the *Novelle* must narrate an event which has actually occurred, and indeed in another place he debates whether a story which is not true can be of any interest. But perhaps it is safer to assume that he means here that the event narrated

must have taken place in the world of reality and not in a purely imaginary world of fancy. Wieland had insisted that the characteristic of the Novelle consisted in the events it narrated having taken place neither in a fairyland, nor arcadia, nor *pais du tendre*, but in the real world, and that they should be, if not everyday events, at least such as might occur every day.¹² Schleiermacher too required that the Novelle should describe the actual circumstances of the bourgeois world.¹³ According to all these views therefore the purely fantastic lies outside the realm of the Novelle and belongs to that of the fairy tale. It will be seen later that the Romantics did not in their Novellen regard this distinction between the world of reality and that of fancy, and continually passed from one into the other. With regard to the second adjective 'unerhörte', every definition of the Novelle contains a cognate word which expresses strangeness, unusualness, unexpectedness—the element of the strange, the unheard-of being certainly one of the essential ingredients of the Novelle. However, that element is capable of very different interpretation and treatment, and whereas the Romantics tended to exploit the wilder more fantastic possibilities of the word, later writers of Novellen have been content to present the unusual and wonderful in less startling forms. With regard to the distinction between the Novelle and the fairy tale, the latter, by the very fact that it removes the events into a world of unreality, can dispense with logical connection in their presentation and allows for that very reason more arbitrary rights to the imagination; whereas the Novelle, because it has to present the unusual, 'das Unerhörte', as having taken place in the world of reality, requires the strictest motivation and the most careful

logical treatment in order to make the unbelievable convince as truth.

In this connection a remark by Paul Ernst, a modern theorist of the *Novelle* and the author of many volumes of *Novellen*, may be cited:

The improbable, that may even be intensified to the impossible, is the very atmosphere in which the *Novelle*, that sister of the fairy tale, is most at home. It is perhaps the greatest pleasure for the poet, as far as this type of composition is concerned, to represent the improbable in such a manner as to give the impression of the purest probability.¹⁴

The next important contribution to the theory of the *Novelle* is that given by Ludwig Tieck in the eleventh volume of his collected works, published in 1829. In the introduction to the volume he writes:

The *Novelle* presents in a clear line a happening of greater or less importance, which, however easily it may occur, is yet strange, and perhaps unique. This twist in the story, this point from which it takes unexpectedly a completely different direction, and develops consequences which are nevertheless natural and entirely in keeping with character and circumstances, will impress itself the more firmly upon the imagination of the reader, in so far as the story in spite of its strangeness might under other circumstances be completely commonplace.

And he proceeds:

A genuine *Novelle* may be bizarre, arbitrary, fantastic, witty, garrulous, losing itself completely even in the presentation of side issues, tragic as well as comic, profound and saucy—all of these qualities are possible in the *Novelle*—but it will always have that extraordinary and striking turning-point (*Wendepunkt*) which distinguishes it from every other narrative form.¹⁵

It will be seen from the passage quoted above that Tieck allows in theory a great deal more latitude to the

strict form of the Novelle than we should have been disposed to expect. In fact a Novelle may be almost anything provided it have that turning-point in its development ('den Wendepunkt') at which the action takes an unexpected turn and develops, to a conclusion which is unforeseen and yet logically convincing. Here and in the continuation of this passage Tieck is certainly speaking *pro domo*, as his later Novellen, which were appearing at the time at which he wrote this definition, strain the form to its utmost if not beyond the possible, so that Hebbel could write (with justice) of him:

In der Novelle dagegen vermag ich dich nicht zu bewundern. Diese reizende Form hast du erweiternd zerstört.¹⁶

Tieck cites, as an instance of this turning-point in a Novelle, the story of Ferdinand and Ottilie in Goethe's *Unterhaltungen*, in which the development of the action is determined by the fact that Ferdinand discovers by accident that a sharp knock against the bureau in which his father keeps his money will open the drawer without the need of a key. It is indeed not difficult to find in most Novellen a turning-point, and many writers on the theory of the Novelle have insisted upon this as a characteristic feature of the genre. The particular point is sometimes alluded to as the Wendepunkt, or the Pointe or the Spitze. It is often compared with the peripeteia, or change from good to bad fortune in tragedy, as indeed there is a definite resemblance between the Novelle and the Drama in construction, the Novelle by its very succinctness having a certain dramatic quality of tension and swiftness of catastrophe.

The next theorist of the Novelle who contributes something new to that which has already been considered

is Paul Heyse. His theory is probably the most famous, though not necessarily on that account the most profound or characteristic. Heyse was himself a writer of *Novellen* of considerable importance, more highly esteemed during his life than he is at present. In 1871 he brought out in conjunction with his friend Hermann Kurz a *Deutscher Novellenschatz*, and in the introduction to the first edition of that collection and in his *Jugenderinnerungen und Bekenntnisse* published thirty years later, he expounds his theory of the 'Falcon'. In a chapter of his reminiscences, *Aus der Werkstatt*, he writes:

We expect of a *Novelle*, to which we attribute artistic values, that it should present to us a significant human fate, an emotional, intellectual or moral conflict, and that it should reveal to us by means of an unusual happening a new aspect of human nature. The peculiar charm of this literary form consists in the event being sharply outlined in a restricted framework, just as the chemist isolates certain chemical elements in order to observe their effect upon one another and the result of their contact, to illustrate thereby some law of nature—herein differing from the wider horizon and the more varied problems of character which the novel spreads out before us. Then: one must ask oneself, whether the story to be related has a strongly marked silhouette, the outlines of which expressed in a few words, would make a characteristic impression, in the manner in which the contents of that story of the Falcon in the *Decamerone*, narrated in five lines, impress themselves profoundly upon the memory.¹⁷

Again in the introduction to the *Novellenschatz*:

Nevertheless it would be no harm, if the story-teller should ask himself in advance...where the Falcon is, that is to say the specific thing which distinguishes this story from thousands of others.¹⁸

The 'Falcon' is an allusion to one of the *novelle* of Boccaccio. At the head of each of the hundred *novelle* of

the *Decamerone* a short summary of the tale is given, as Paul Heyse says, in five lines. For the ninth tale of the fifth day the summary runs as follows:

Federigo degli Alberti loves and is not loved in return, and spending all in courteous fashion he impoverishes himself until he possesses only a falcon which, having nothing else, he gives to eat to his lady who has come to his house; she, knowing this, changes her mind, takes him as her husband and makes him rich.

The theory of Heyse proves under investigation to be neither very profound nor very illuminating. All that he says in effect is that a Novelle must have a definite subject matter. What he does not say, but what the extreme popularity of his theory proves, is that the connection with a concrete symbol impresses both theory and Novelle more permanently upon the memory than anything else. There seems to be no reason why a Novelle should contain such a concrete symbol, at the same time a great many Novellen do in effect contain one. Two other instances from the *Decamerone* may be cited. Both are taken from the fourth day, on which all the stories deal with lovers who have come to an unhappy end and have therefore all a certain similarity of subject matter. The summary of the first tale runs thus: 'Tancred, Prince of Salerno, kills the lover of his daughter and sends his heart to her in a golden bowl. She pours poison upon it, drinks it and dies'. The summary of the fifth tale is as follows: 'The brothers of Elisabeth murder her lover, who appears to her in a dream and indicates to her the place where he lies buried. She therefore exhumes him secretly, takes his head, sets it in a pot of basil and sheds tears upon it for an hour, until her brothers take it from

her and she dies of grief'. Both these Novellen, like the Falcon Novelle, are characterized by something which belongs specifically to them and distinguishes them from each other and from all other Novellen about unhappy lovers. And in all three cases that specific something is a concrete symbol: the falcon, the heart, the pot of basil. Certainly it would be untrue to say that every Novelle has some such concrete symbol by which it is remembered, but there are many in which it does occur; the two horses in *Michael Kohlhaas*, for instance, which reappear at every important point in the story. Sometimes the author stresses this symbol even by using it as the title of his story: *Die Judenbuche*, *Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe*, *Der Schimmelreiter*, *Das Amulett*, for instance. Heyse's 'Falkentheorie' is in reality only a label or pigeon-hole theory, requiring that every Novelle should have so definite and striking an element in its subject matter that it can easily be recognized by this label, and pigeon-holed in the memory.

This purely external use of a concrete symbol as supplying the characteristic of any given Novelle however draws attention to the fact that in many Novellen a concrete symbol is used to express some inner meaning, often the real essence and significance of the Novelle. 'Die Judenbuche' in Droste-Hülshoff's story fulfils both purposes: it does outwardly supply the label, it is the Falcon, by which the story is remembered and at the same time it represents the power of fate in the life of the hero. In Storm's *Immensee* the concrete symbol is no longer the label: the white water-lily towards which the hero swims in the night, but it contains the inner meaning of the Novelle; the same is true of the swans of which the Graf

dreams in *Die Marquise von O.*; of the ring which rolls away in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*; of the hunting horn which is lost and recovered in *Die Richterin*. In none of these Novellen does the concrete symbol occupy so important a place in the economy of the story that it can be used as a sort of label to identify the particular Novelle; but in all of them it has an inner significance and symbolizes the action. One thing further may be said of Heyse's theory of the Novelle. He does draw attention again to the severity of form which Tieck had disregarded. He speaks of isolation of the event, the conflict, as the chemist isolates in order to experiment, by his use of the scientific metaphor anticipating some of the theoretical pronouncements of the Naturalistic school.

A characteristic of the Novelle which is stressed by Spielhagen concerns an aspect not yet considered, namely the type of character which the Novelle presents. 'It will always be the specific quality of the Novelle as distinguished from the novel (in which a development of the characters or at least of the hero takes place) that it brings into contact characters who are already fully developed, who merely reveal or as it were unfold themselves in the course of that contact.'¹⁹ Without necessarily accepting this distinction between 'fully developed' characters in the Novelle, and characters whose development takes place in the course of the events related as in the novel, it may be conceded that the Novelle, by the very fact that it deals with one event or situation, is less capable of presenting the gradual process of development than the novel. At the same time the impact of the event upon the character in the Novelle produces certain changes and whether these changes be regarded as development of

character or merely as the unfolding of qualities already inherent in the character seems to be purely a question of the point of view adopted. It is however true to say that in the *Novelle* the event which befalls the hero has the function of revealing what was inherent in him: and bringing out by the force of its impact qualities which were already present but more or less quiescent. Whether the event creates those qualities or merely arouses them to activity is a question to which no categorical answer can be given. Kleist seems to suggest that his Michael Kohlhaas was potentially 'einer der entsetzlichsten und einer der rechtschaffensten Menschen zugleich', and that it required merely the injustice done to him to reveal that darker quality in his apparently so law-abiding life. In *Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe* the discovery of the falsification of the love letters serves to reveal the real character of the three persons who are concerned, but in varying degrees; in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs* the death of Astorre's brother and the dissolution of his vow reveal qualities in himself which become fateful for him afterwards, but are very subtly indicated by the author as existing already in his hero. This *Novelle* by C. F. Meyer, a *tour de force* of technique, reveals nearly all the peculiar qualities of the *Novelle* in a marked degree.

Spielhagen points out another characteristic of the *Novelle* which is also mentioned by Heyse: 'that, in order that the effect of the contact should not be weakened, only few characters should be involved, so that the action presented will be of short duration'.²⁰ This restriction of the number of characters to those who are immediately concerned in the problem or conflict is a natural condition of the *Novellenform*. Heyse points out that Goethe's

Wahlverwandtschaften, originally planned as a Novelle, has become a novel by the accretion of a number of characters who are not immediately concerned in the central problem. For the working out of this indeed only four people are required: Eduard, Charlotte, Ottilie and the Hauptmann, all the rest are superfluous to the work considered as a Novelle. So that it may be said of the *Wahlverwandtschaften* that it is in essence and intention a Novelle but has become a novel in the actual working out.

A summary of these opinions upon the nature of the Novelle gives the following general characteristics of the genre. The Novelle is an epic form and as such deals with events rather than actions; it restricts itself to a single event (or situation or conflict), laying the stress primarily upon the event and showing the effect of this event upon a person or group of persons; by its concentration upon a single event it tends to present it as chance ('Zufall') and it is its function to reveal that what is apparently chance, and may appear as such to the person concerned, is in reality fate. Thus the attitude of mind to the universe which it may be said to represent is an irrationalistic one. It must present some aspect of life (event, situation, conflict) which arouses interest by its strangeness, remoteness from everyday happenings, but at the same time its action must take place in the world of reality and not that of pure imagination. It depends for its effectiveness and its power to convince upon the severity and artistry of its form. Characteristic of its construction is a certain turning-point, at which the development of the narrative moves unexpectedly in a different direction from that which was anticipated, and arrives at a conclusion which

surprises, but at the same time satisfies logically. It should deal with some definite and striking subject which marks it clearly and distinguishes it from every other Novelle. This striking element in the subject matter is frequently connected with a concrete object, which may in some Novellen acquire a certain inner symbolical significance. The effect of the impact of the event upon the person or group of persons is to reveal qualities which were latent and may have been unsuspectedly present in them, the event being used as the acid which separates and reveals the various qualities in the person or persons under investigation.

By its very objectivity as a literary form it enables the poet to present subjective and lyrical moods indirectly and symbolically. It concerns itself with a small group of persons only, restricting itself to those who are immediately connected with the problem or situation with which it deals. Its origin and home are in a cultured society.

These characteristics are as many as can be postulated of the Novelle as such. But with this general idea of the genre Novelle it is now possible to trace its origin and development in German literature.²¹

Chapter II

THE CLASSICAL NOVELLE—GOETHE

The word 'Novelle', as the name of a recognized literary genre, first makes its appearance in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century. Wieland gives the first definition of it in the second edition of *Don Sylvio von Rosalva* (1772): 'The name "Novelle" is given for preference to a kind of tale which is distinguished from the long novel by the simplicity of its plan and the smaller compass of its story, and stands in the same relation to it as short plays to full-length tragedies and comedies'.¹ The word both here and in later references to it in the eighteenth century is used of French, Italian and Spanish tales, and though it gradually became acclimatized, it was not until the beginning of the next century that German writers used it to describe their own tales and stories, one of the first being Wieland himself, who in his *Hexameron von Rosenhain* (1805) describes a tale contained therein as 'eine Novelle ohne Titel'. Writers such as Kleist and Hoffmann did not call their works 'Novellen' but simply 'Erzählungen'; and it was only at the beginning of the 1820's, under the influence of Tieck whose later stories were beginning to appear, that the term became generally used. An isolated example in the eighteenth century of a writer who uses the title 'Novelle' for his own works is G. A. Meissner, who published in 1786 a volume entitled *Novellen des Rittmeister Schuster*; and it is perhaps not without significance that Meissner was the author of a translation of the *Decamerone* which appeared in 1782.

His earlier as well as his later collections of tales appeared under the title of *Skizzen*. Short stories of all kinds are naturally to be found in German literature of the eighteenth century in abundance. It is not until they attain to something approaching artistic form that it is possible to regard them as a specific poetical genre, and to trace the modifications and development of that genre in successive examples thereof.

The earliest works which can be described as *Novellen* in this sense are the tales contributed by Goethe in 1795 to Schiller's journal *Die Horen* under the title *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*: a collection of tales set in a framework similar to that of the *Decamerone*. Goethe does not, however, describe them himself as *Novellen*, but through the mouths of the narrators as 'moralische Erzählungen'. Thus the situation at the end of the eighteenth century with regard to the *Novelle* in German literature is this: the new genre has made its appearance in the examples written by Goethe but has not yet appropriated to itself the name of *Novelle*. Further a provisional aesthetic of it (by Friedrich Schlegel) has appeared but has not been applied to any indigenous works. The concurrence of the examples furnished by Goethe with the theory put forward by Schlegel, however, serves to establish the genre; and from the beginning of the nineteenth century it becomes increasingly popular.

Some attempt must now be made to account for the emergence of the *Novelle* in German literature at this particular period, and it will be seen that the demand for short stories already existed though it was supplied by works of such inferior artistic merit that they could hardly

lay claim to the title of *Novellen*. The type of fiction which had been most widely read during the seventeenth century was the cumbrous and elaborate baroque novel primarily addressed to an aristocratic public. This had been superseded in popularity by such novels as Weise's *Die drei ärgsten Ertznarren* (1672) and Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* (1731–43), both of which contain within the ostensible framework of the novel a large number of individual episodes and adventures which are in the nature of independent short stories. The general tendency of German literature during the eighteenth century was towards the creation of a specifically bourgeois literature, the expression of the growing awareness on the part of the middle classes of their social existence, of which awareness the appearance and immense popularity of the 'bürgerliche Trauerspiel' in the middle of the century are evidence. The eighteenth century in Germany sees the emergence of a bourgeois reading public, which, educated in literary matters by the 'moralischen Wochenschriften' and the works of Gellert, demanded for its literary entertainment works of fiction dealing with the actual conditions of middle-class life, in which its own interests lay. In view of the more restricted amount of leisure which was available to this middle-class reading public it was natural that the mere question of time should, as a contributory factor at least, influence the length of works intended for purely entertaining reading. At any rate from about the middle of the eighteenth century a great demand for short stories arose, and since it could not be supplied by indigenous authors, purveyors of reading matter resorted to translations from foreign languages and flooded the market with collections of tales. These

were for the most part without literary merit, put together by jobbing translators who published them without acknowledgement of the original sources. Such collections were the *Abendstunden* (1760), which were continued in series after series. These collections of translated tales were followed by the *Satirische Erzählungen* of J. K. Wezel (1771), the already mentioned *Skizzen* of A. G. Meissner (fourteen volumes between 1778 and 1796), the *Moralische Erzählungen* of Sophie von Laroche (1784), and the *Straussfedergeschichten* published by Nicolai, some of which were contributed as hackwork by the youthful Ludwig Tieck. In accordance with the taste of the times these collections, as their titles suggest, consisted of tales of satirical and moralizing tone; and this moralizing tendency was at least one factor in keeping them below the level of literary excellence. Neither these nor other collections which appeared at this time can be described as Novellen, for they neither achieved nor indeed aimed at the precision of form and the artistic composition which are characteristic of that genre. Yet the demand which was provisionally supplied by them could also be supplied by more artistic stories, and in effect it was as a corrective to these inferior productions that the Novelle came into existence as a literary form in German literature in the stories contained in the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*.

There is a singular unanimity between the practice of Goethe in the composition of the stories contained in this collection and the theory of the Novelle put forward by Friedrich Schlegel; and this is due to the fact that Goethe in his practice was basing himself upon the methods of Boccaccio, and that Schlegel was deducing his theory

from an examination of the same author. A few words therefore seem necessary about the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio in so far as it forms the starting-point for the development of the Novelle in Germany.

The *Decamerone* of Boccaccio, the most famous collection of tales in European literature, and the prototype of numberless other collections, consists of a hundred tales which are told on ten successive days by a group of ten young Florentines, who have taken refuge from the plague which laid Florence waste in the year 1348, and sought shelter and safety in a country house in the neighbourhood of that town. The stories therefore are set in a framework which is carefully elaborated and of considerable importance for the work as a whole. The introduction gives an account in very detailed horror of the ravages of the plague and the general dissolution of social order and rules for the decent conduct of life which has thus been occasioned. The picture of Florentine life which this introduction presents is one of social chaos, in which the most honoured and sacred customs and institutions are temporarily suspended or openly flouted.

A group of seven ladies meet one morning in a church in order to hear Mass. After this is over they fall into conversation upon the dangers and discomforts of life in Florence, and one suggests that they shall withdraw to a safe distance from the town and there pass the time in pleasant and profitable social intercourse until it is again safe to return to ordinary life. The proposal is accepted by the rest, and the invitation is further extended to three young men of their acquaintance who agree to accompany them. Arrived at the country house they decide that in order to pass the days of their—certainly very agreeable—

exile with profit and pleasure to themselves, they shall take it in turn to tell stories. A master or mistress of the ceremonies is appointed in turn for each day, is crowned with flowers, and enjoys the privilege and duty of deciding the subject matter for the stories of the day in question. Everything takes place with the utmost order, regularity and decorum and in keeping with the manners and customs of a highly cultivated social class. In contrast to the collapse of social order in Florence, a little social commonwealth is established amongst this group of refugees, to the self-imposed rules of which every member of the group willingly subjects him- or herself. The framework of the stories is consistently maintained. Each story is prefaced by a general reflection upon the subject matter; at the end of each story a slight comment is made upon it, though nothing in the nature of serious criticism is offered—which would be out of place in the circumstances. The stories are very varied in emotional content—tragic, farcical, erotic, witty; the improper stories, by reason of which the *Decamerone* enjoys a certain popularity, are only a minority. But however improper the stories may be which are related, the behaviour of the characters therein finds no counterpart in the behaviour of the story-tellers themselves. With regard to the choice of subject matter, Boccaccio does not draw upon heroic legends or fantastic tales of chivalry, but for the most part his tales are rooted in the political and cultural conditions of Italy of his day. The characters are members of the middle and upper middle classes of contemporary Italy, and the picture of life which he presents is that of the world which lay around him. That is to say, his subject matter is contemporary and realistic and is taken

from the life of the individual citizen. It may even be said that the *Novellen* of Boccaccio are in essence gossip raised to the dignity of literature.

These stories of Boccaccio determine the form of the *Novelle* for European literature in general. It is therefore important to see what are the characteristics of this new literary genre as it develops in Italy in the fourteenth century. In the first place they are stories told to a cultivated circle of listeners, and the existence and presence of the story-teller are definitely assumed. Though in the *Novellendichtung* of Germany in the nineteenth century this aspect of the *Novelle* is sometimes suppressed—in the *Novellen* of Kleist for instance—it reappears again and again under a great variety of modifications, thus giving the form of the *Rahmengeschichte* or story set in a framework, in reality the basic form of the *Novelle*. It is used by Hoffmann, Hauff, Theodor Storm, Gottfried Keller and with great virtuosity by C. F. Meyer.

As in old heroic ages of the Epic—with Homer and in Northern literature for instance—one must assume a Rhapsode or Minstrel relating to a circle of princes and heroes the deeds of heroes and demi-gods, not greatly different from the listeners themselves, the attitude to life, the actions of the characters being easily comprehensible to the circle of listeners; so in the bourgeois world of Florence the story-teller relates incidents and events which in spite of an element of strangeness, which makes them worth relating, reflect a world which is familiar to the listeners from their own experience. The epic narrative has moved over from heroic society to bourgeois society. These stories are realistic in the sense that they deal with the ordinary events of contemporary

life; they are conceived as a form of social entertainment addressed to a cultivated audience, and presenting the incident or event narrated in a form which is in keeping with the social code of the audience to which it is addressed. It is above all a question of the 'tone', the manner, rather than the subject matter: The most tragic events—the father who sends the heart of her lover to his daughter—the most improper can be related, but they must be related in a manner which does not offend—the audience must not be harrowed nor erotically excited beyond the limits which are bearable in good society. The circumstances of time, place, custom, landscape are given in a generalized way; just as precisely as is required for the understanding of the story, but not elaborately developed so as to appear to be an end in themselves. That is to say local and historical colour does not find a place in the *Novelle*.

It is in this form that the *Novelle* comes into German literature, in practice in Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, and in theory with the definition given by Friedrich Schlegel. Hardly, however, has it started upon its course than it develops, as will later be demonstrated, along such different lines that it becomes almost a different genre, though it continually harks back to its original form. Its characteristic of being a form of social entertainment is almost immediately lost sight of; but as such it appeared still to Goethe, as the title of his collections suggests; and in practice all his *Novellen*, with the important exception of one, are presented as being either narrated or read to a group of persons for their entertainment or instruction. Thus the Baroness lays down what are, in her opinion, the requirements of a story:

You have perfect liberty in your choice of subjects for your tales; but let it at least be apparent in the form that we are in good society. Give us to begin with a story concerning a few persons and events, which is well invented and thought out, true, natural and not ordinary, as much action as is indispensable, and as much thought as necessary; a story which does not lag, does not remain attached to one spot too long, but also one which does not unduly hasten; in which human beings appear, such as one likes them, not perfect but good, not exceptional but interesting and amiable. Let your story be entertaining while we listen to it, satisfying when it has come to an end, leaving behind it a gentle stimulus to meditate further upon it.

The *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* is, like the *Decamerone*, a framework story and, like the *Decamerone*, it has for a background disordered and disorganized social conditions. A number of German aristocrats are driven out of their castle on the left bank of the Rhine by the French revolutionary armies and take refuge in a country house in more secure surroundings. Here they are joined unexpectedly by friends, who are also fleeing from dangers to which an invading army has exposed them. In the country house in which they are all assembled political discussions arise between the various members of the group, opinions are divided and, on the part of one young man, expressed with so much violence that the new arrivals are offended and take their leave. The breach of social decorum of which the young man has made himself guilty is felt very keenly by the lady of the house, and she insists that in future their conversations shall concern themselves with topics which do not give rise to such painful differences of opinion. It is then suggested by the family priest, who is a member of the party,

that he shall tell stories from the collection which he has made during the course of his life, and this suggestion is gladly adopted. It will be seen then that, for Goethe as for Boccaccio, the telling of stories was regarded as a social accomplishment which could be utilized for the reassertion and preservation of a certain equilibrium in social intercourse; and the later Novelle 'die wunderlichen Nachbarskinder', which is inserted in the novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, is introduced into the narrative for the same purpose: to relieve the emotional tension amongst a group of persons. From Boccaccio then Goethe derives the idea of the Novelle as a form of social entertainment, and like Boccaccio he narrates his stories with a certain coolness, objectivity and distance, and confines himself to general outlines as far as descriptions of place, custom and landscape are concerned. The question of the novelty of a story is debated amongst the characters of the framework; and the conclusion is reached that the element of novelty is an important one in a story, but that it may lie in the manner of presentation as well as in the subject matter itself. The six stories contained in the work are of various kinds and very varying lengths. One is merely an anecdote occupying hardly a page. For this procedure Goethe has precedent in Boccaccio; on the sixth day of the *Decamerone* the stories consist entirely of anecdotes relating witty retorts. Three of the stories are merely retellings of stories already known; one story is apparently freely invented by Goethe.

There is however one element in these stories which does not derive from Boccaccio, but from the popular collections of tales which were the favourite reading matter of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and

against whose inartistic and unliterary form Goethe's own stories were to serve as a check and as an indication of the possibility of more artistic development. This element is that of the moral story. The two most successful and carefully elaborated stories in this collection, *Der Prokurator* and *Ferdinand und Ottilie*, are definitely 'moralische Erzählungen', are described as such by their narrator, and are intended to demonstrate an ethical idea. 'Only that story deserves to be called moral', says the narrator at the close of his story of the Procurator, 'which shows us that man possesses within himself the force to act even contrary to his inclination through a conviction of something better. This story teaches us this, and no moral story can teach anything else.'

The stories contained in the collection are of unequal interest and merit: *Die Sängerin Antonelli* is a ghost story, which is neither very convincing nor very thrilling; of the two stories which are retold from the *Mémoires* of the Maréchal de Bassompierre, the first has a certain sinister and mysterious interest; the second is the very slight anecdote which has been treated by various writers, latterly by Emil Strauss in a very beautiful Novelle called *Der Schleier*: a wife discovers that her husband is unfaithful to her, finds him sleeping beside his mistress, and leaving her veil upon the bed goes away without revealing in any other way her knowledge of his infidelity. It is interesting to note that in its original form, and as related by Goethe, the story develops certain fairy-tale elements, which later writers in their versions of it omit altogether. The most successful of these stories is undoubtedly *Der Prokurator*, an adaptation of the last of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, a collection of French stories, imitated from

Boccaccio, which appeared in the fifteenth century. In his version of it Goethe has deepened the ethical significance of a story which in its original form was in essence only a witty anecdote. The feeling which the original story arouses is that of a certain malicious amusement in seeing how the principal character has been tricked into retaining her virtue; whilst in Goethe's version she has learned in her own person, as the narrator says, 'that man possesses within himself the force to act even contrary to his inclination through a conviction of something better'. What in the original version is merely the result of physical conditions becomes in Goethe's version the result of an ethical conviction: what was merely an ironical perhaps rather cynical reflection upon the connection between virtuous conduct and the physical state of the body is raised by Goethe into the realm where moral conflicts and decisions are the ruling factors. The story is briefly this: a young wife, whose elderly husband has gone away on a long sea voyage, falls in love with a young doctor of law ('der Prokurator') whom she sees from her window. She summons him to her presence and declares her love to him. He promises to gratify her desires, but informs her that he has made a vow to mortify the flesh for a year. He has lived on bread and water now for ten months and asks her whether she will shorten the remaining time, during which his vow must be kept, by fasting herself, for a month, with him. This she agrees to do and fulfils her promise conscientiously, only to find after three weeks' fasting that she is prepared to forgo the pleasures of a love affair and remain faithful to her husband. The freely invented story of Ferdinand and Ottilie relates how a frivolous young man discovers by chance that he can

obtain money from his father's bureau and makes use of this circumstance in order to purchase gifts for the girl with whom he is in love; how he eventually realizes the dishonesty of his action and by industry and perseverance succeeds in paying back the money he has stolen, until he rises to a position of honour and affluence by his own efforts. As in the story of the Procurator the moral idea of self-mastery is the core of the little work. Technically it has not the same directness and simplicity of form as the earlier story; but it constitutes a very characteristic example both of Goethe's conception of the possibilities and aims of the short story and of his ethical attitude in general during the period in which it was written. It is noticeable that all Goethe's shorter narrative works belong to the later years of his life, and all the more important of them are expressions of some ethical idea.

A second group of Novellen are those which eventually find a place in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, many of which have this peculiarity, that they are narrated of characters, who afterwards appear as persons in the novel itself. In some cases the action of the Novelle is incomplete as narrated, and is rounded off later in contact with the characters of the novel: thus Goethe introduces a new variation of the framework technique, which rather tends to break down the original form, and has a certain similarity with some of the tricks of romantic irony which are used by Brentano and Jean Paul in their novels. These Novellen, all of which preserve the original intention of the Novelle as being something related for the entertainment of a definite social group, vary very much in subject matter and in quality: some are merely anecdotes, some are certainly very poor specimens of the story-teller's art.

Among the more successful are *Sankt Joseph der Zweite*—the story of his own life is here related by a young carpenter whom Wilhelm meets on his wanderings; and *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, the characters of which appear later in the novel itself. In this story the hero renounces his claims to the love of a young woman in favour of his son, the deciding factor in determining his action being the loss of one of his front teeth.

The idea of self-mastery which is the ethical content of the earlier Novellen, forms the underlying motif of the last of Goethe's Novellen, which he entitles simply *Novelle*, as though to indicate that he wished it to be regarded as a model specimen of what a *Novelle* should be. But in this work, completed thirty years after the stories in the *Unterhaltungen*, Goethe has already moved away from the basic form of *Novelle* as it appears in Boccaccio. It will perhaps be interesting to apply Heyse's test to it, that it should be possible to give its substance in five lines: a princess and a young courtier are overtaken upon their ride into the mountains by a tiger which has escaped from a neighbouring menagerie. The courtier shoots the tiger, whereupon the owner of the animal appears and deplores its unnecessary death. He informs the courtier that a lion is also at liberty and beseeches him not to shoot the lion as well, as it can be overcome by other means, and this is indeed brought about by the singing of a child. Thus baldly stated the story does not appear to contain the elements of a first-rate *Novelle*. And indeed all that is important in the story is not, as Heyse requires, apparent in the summary, but has in fact slipped through and become lost to view, though the overcoming of one animal by force and of the other by the power of music

seems to suggest a symbolical and ethical meaning. And it is indeed herein that the significance of the story lies. Goethe's own explanation to Eckermann was: 'It was the aim of this Novelle to show how that which is unruly and untameable can often be better overcome by love and piety than by force'.² But it may well be asked whether the Novelle as it appears in the *Decamerone* has any aim beyond that of telling an entertaining story.

That the question should be asked at this point is due to a change which the Novelle has undergone under Goethe's treatment—a change which is already adumbrated in the Novellen of the *Unterhaltungen*. The centre of gravity has been shifted from the external events related to the inner significance of those events. The symbolical, the allegorical, that which is postulated as one element in the Novelle by Schlegel has here become the predominant element. Already the genre Novelle has undergone a modification in the form of a *Verinnerlichung*; and with this change in content has come also a change in technique, which has become very subtle and, to borrow a metaphor from music, contrapuntal. This work of Goethe's, which is superficially unsatisfying, is in fact, as a close examination will reveal, a marvel of subtle technique, delicate adjustment of theme and motive, expressing in hints and suggestions, in oblique reference, in the slightest actions, in the physical attitude of the characters even, the ethical idea of self-mastery. The core of the action is the love of the courtier Honorio for the Princess, which is only hinted at and never openly stated. The lion and tiger are symbols of that which he must overcome in himself. Compared with the technique of a Novelle by Boccaccio one may describe that of Goethe's Novelle as

one of muted strings: the important action, which is an entirely inward one, is suggested only, but the suggestion is supported and illuminated by the external events. A delicate music accompanies the Novelle throughout and asserts itself at the end triumphantly in the song of the child who leads the lion captive.

Certain other characteristics of this particular work may be noted: the pictorial quality of the composition, the frequent assembling of the action as it were into one striking picture: thus the grouping round the dead tiger; the attitude of Honorio after he has killed it; the final view of him, holding his pistol, and gazing into the sunset. Again the greater importance which is attached to the landscape and the description of nature, than is usual in the older forms of the Novelle; in which connection the use of the telescope should be noted as a definite artistic trick to bring together the two centres of the action—the market place where the menagerie has caught fire, and the mountain side on which the tiger overtakes the riders. With regard to the ‘tone’ in which the story is related—that suitability to the customs and rules of good society in which, as Friedrich Schlegel remarked, the Novelle is at home—it may be said that it is more meticulously observed here even than in the earlier Novellen of Goethe. But it is noticeable that this, Goethe’s Novelle *par excellence*, has no framework: it is presented purely objectively without the intermediary of a story-teller, as though Goethe felt—and indeed it would seem justly—that the subtleties of composition, technique and inner meaning could hardly be appreciated by a listening audience, but would require the more careful and protracted attention of a reading audience.

One line of development of the Novelle in German literature comes to an end here. It may be called the classical Novelle, in so far as it is the nearest approach to the classical prototype of the Novelle in Boccaccio; and because it is classical also in a narrower sense, in so far as it presents a picture of human life, as seen from the point of view of the classical Humanitätsideal, of man as an ethical being, determining his own actions. But this very stressing of the ethical element marks from the beginning a certain dissimilarity from the basic type of Novelle, and the development of this element in the direction of a symbolization and Verinnerlichung, carried as far in Goethe's Novelle as is compatible with the genre Novelle at all—it requires only a step for it to pass over into either the romantic fairy tale or the legend—this development of it takes it even further away from the original type. When the Boccaccio Novelle is revived in German literature, at the end of the nineteenth century by Paul Ernst, it dispenses with the moralizing, ethical elements which Goethe put into it.

To sum up then: the Novelle makes its appearance in German literature under the influence and indeed in definite imitation of Boccaccio, but containing a moralizing element which is alien to the Novelle in its original form, being a legacy of the short stories of the eighteenth century. This moralizing element—or rather this ethical significance of the action related—is developed by Goethe to the furthest extent which is compatible with the form of the Novelle as a genre, and with him this particular type of Novelle comes to an end.³

Chapter III

THE METAPHYSICAL NOVELLE—KLEIST

Goethe speaks of the stories contained in the *Unterhaltungen* as 'moralische Erzählungen', and it is possible to see in them, in spite of this description, examples of the classical type of Novelle which has its origin with Boccaccio. Kleist proposed originally to call his Novellen 'moralische Erzählungen' (certainly they are moral tales in a very different sense from those of Maria Edgeworth), but the resemblance between them and the Novellen of Boccaccio is hard to establish. They are moral tales—not that they convey a moral as Goethe's Novellen do—but in this sense that they propound moral problems with which not only the principal characters but sometimes the subsidiary characters have to deal. Generally the problems are insoluble. They are always as different from those with which Goethe is concerned as Kleist's play *Penthesilea* is from Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

The Novellen of Kleist appeared in a collected edition in 1810, though some of them had been published separately at earlier dates. There are eight in all: *Der Findling*; *Michael Kohlhaas*; *Das Bettelweib von Locarno*; *Der Zweikampf*; *Die Marquise von O.*; *Das Erdbeben in Chili*; *Die Verlobung in St Domingo*; *Die heilige Cäcilia*. They represent something entirely new in the Novelle, and have so little in common with the accepted form beyond the mere outward characteristics of the Novelle, that it is permissible to feel that the form has been violated by Kleist. They have significantly no framework: there is no

indication of the presence of a story-teller. Ermatinger describes the attitude of the story-teller thus: a single individual entertains in an hour of comfortable ease a group of people by the narration of a happening which is completed at the time of narration. The effect of the circumstances in which the story is told upon the external form of the narrative is the following: 'Since it takes place in an hour of comfortable ease its aim must be to maintain the same atmosphere'.¹ Nothing of this can be traced in the *Novellen* of Kleist; they are not only in their objectivity, in the uncommented way in which they are presented, but also in their emotional intensity the work of a poet who is primarily a dramatist and not an epic writer; one whose business it is to stir the feelings of an audience by heightening his effects to the utmost. When Schlegel speaks of the origin and home of the *Novelle* as being 'die feine Gesellschaft', one can only say of these *Novellen* of Kleist's that their home and origin are in no sort of society whatever, but in solitude and anguish. Nor can one imagine the sort of society in which they could be narrated as a form of entertainment.

This absence of the social element in Kleist's treatment of the *Novelle* is certainly partly due to the character and temperament of the author who was by nature as well as by force of circumstance a solitary man among his fellow beings. But actual political and social conditions must also be taken into account. All of the *Novellen* were written during the years in which the Napoleonic wars were destroying the fabric of an ordered society in Germany. Goethe, in spite of the convulsions caused by the French Revolution, could still fall back upon the standard court society of Weimar, which, though small and

existing in a rarefied atmosphere of culture, supplied him with an undisturbed background. In later years, after the Napoleonic wars had come to an end, Hoffmann could collect in Berlin the semblance of a cultured society and the framework *Novelle* comes back with the *Serapionsbrüder*. Tieck's attempt in his *Phantasmus* to create a cultured society for the background of his stories resolves itself into a set of abstract types of persons, each of whom represents some specific attitude of mind. Lacking the social background and the cultivated society for the entertainment of which the *Novelle* was in its origin intended, Kleist removes it into the wilderness in which he dwells alone, communing with his soul on the problems of the individual and fate.

Kleist's *Novellen*—like Kleist himself—stand on the dividing line between classical and romantic. They still possess in their outward form something of the self-contained quality which is the characteristic of classical literature. In two of them at least, *Michael Kohlhaas* and *Die Marquise von O.*, the principal characters achieve a self-mastery, the attainment of which is the ethical problem in the classical works of Goethe and Schiller. But the world in which the action of all Kleist's stories is laid is no longer the world with secure foundations which Goethe and Schiller had constructed, but one whose foundations are floating in incomprehensibility. The irrational, as has been shown, is an element in the *Novelle*—the event as such, which strikes into the lives of the characters from without, is irrational. But with Goethe the irrational in the event can be assimilated to the ethical world, overcome, subdued to the requirements of order: thus the self-opening cupboard in *Ferdinand und Ottilie*, the

escaped tiger and lion in the Novelle. With Kleist the irrational element comes from a deeper source; it is not mere chance as it is with Goethe, but an expression of a fundamental quality of the universe: the faulty nature of the world—of the world as he experienced it, as a conflict of irreconcilable antitheses. What Kleist achieved for the development of the Novelle in respect of its content was not, as has been often said, that he made the tragic Novelle possible—already in Boccaccio there are tragic Novellen—but that he created the metaphysical Novelle.² All his Novellen are expressions of metaphysical problems—not psychological problems primarily, though psychology plays a part in them. In all of the Novellen the characters are confronted with a situation which shatters their belief in the world order and produces in them a state of mind which may be described as an agonized questioning in respect of the sum total of things. This is the essential attitude of mind of Kleist himself, and it appears with equal clearness in the dramas and in the Novellen. The Novellen have the same quality of having burst inevitably out of Kleist's being as the dramas have and they present the same characteristics. One of these characteristics of all Kleist's work is the harshness of conflicting antitheses, which finds expression sometimes in the character of his persons, sometimes in the situation. It is a presentation by means of concrete examples of that inherent dualism of the universe of which the tragic dramatist is so acutely aware. The characters of the dramas and Novellen alike reveal it: Penthesilea, tender lover and fury; Toni (*Die Verlobung in St Domingo*), self-sacrificing lover and decoy; Jupiter (*Amphitryon*), God and seducer; der Graf (*Die Marquise von O.*), rescuer and seducer, or as the

Marquise herself calls him, angel and devil; Michael Kohlhaas, 'one of the most upright and at the same time one of the most terrible men of his age'.

In the situations as well as in the characters the same violence of contrast may be observed. Both in *Die Familie Schroffenstein* and *Penthesilea* scenes of idyllic grace and beauty between the lovers contrast with scenes of utmost horror and carnage: the Rosenfest and the death of Achilles in *Penthesilea* are particularly noticeable. In *Das Erdbeben in Chili* there is a scene of Eden-like beauty set between the natural horrors of the earthquake and the more revolting horrors in the cathedral when the mob lynches the lovers. The same conflict is revealed in the inner situation where the characters are driven to a confusion of feeling by apparently irreconcilable facts, or deeds which seem to them to be incompatible with any ordered universe: Alcmene, who is deceived by Jupiter into believing that he is her husband; the parents of the Marquise von O. who are required to believe that their daughter is innocent, when it seems to them that this is only possible if the course of nature be reversed; the characters of *Der Zweikampf* who must believe that the voice of God itself has spoken falsely if they are to believe in their own truth; the father in *Der Findling*, who is confronted with such baseness in the person of his foster-child, that life on earth is not enough for him to achieve his revenge. The Novellen only repeat in another form the same problem as that which lies at the root of all Kleist's dramas.

It is not in the nature of the Novelle, requiring as it does as a necessary ingredient the element of the unusual, 'das Unerhörte', or whatever term may be used to de-

scribe it, to give a generalized picture of the world. By its very nature it relates not the natural course of events, but the exception to that course of events. At the most it can be said to illustrate the natural order of things by the contrast to them which it presents, and this is perhaps the meaning of Schlegel when he says that 'die Novelle bringt eine Anlage zur Ironie schon in der Geburtsstunde mit auf die Welt'—it supplies as it were an ironical gloss on the ordinary course of events. Still, in its choice of subject matter from contemporary and familiar social conditions, the Novelle in its original form might be said to provide something in the nature of a picture of actual life. Nothing of the sort, however, can be said of Kleist's Novellen. He makes the utmost use of the liberty accorded to the writer of Novellen to deal with the strange, the unusual, the extraordinary. Earthquakes, war, revolution, murder, rape—these are the aspects of life which he presents. But though such events may be regarded as exceptional and abnormal from the point of view of the ordered bourgeois existence with which the Novelle had hitherto concerned itself—uncharacteristic events—in the world of Kleist's imagination they are symbols and typical expressions of the cleavage and internecine strife in the universe as it appeared to him. In this respect again the tragic dramatist reveals himself, for the tragic dramatist, as Hebbel points out, has specifically to deal with the abnormal conditions of life. In his choice of subject matter as well, then, Kleist breaks with the social Novelle, and introduces two new elements which are further developed by the Romantic writers of Novellen: the historical and the exotic.

It has been shown that the Novelle in its original form

and as practised by Goethe deals with the contemporary and the local, the latter in a generalized way. It gives pictures of life as known and familiar to the listeners, without any attempt to elaborate local colour. That such collections of tales as the *Decamerone*, the stories of Cervantes, even the *Arabian Nights*, have for modern readers the charm of the exotic is due to the fact that they were written not for them but for an audience of another period and country. Even in the *Arabian Nights* most of the characters belonged to the contemporary and familiar life, and the supernatural beings were a part of the belief at least of the listeners. Only the difference in time and place has given to these collections of stories the additional, perhaps fallacious, charm of the exotic and the picturesque. The equivalent of the *Decamerone* to-day would be a collection of stories dealing not with romantic subjects from Egypt or mediaeval Italy, but mainly with contemporary London and relating the methods by which Lady X. deceived her husband, or Miss Y. tricked her parents, or Mr Z. ran away with his employer's daughter. But with Kleist the subject matter is definitely shifted from the circle of familiar and contemporary things into a world which already by its remoteness seems to lend more probability to the monstrous events which he has to record. The Romantics make a much fuller use of these new possibilities for the Novelle. *Michael Kohlhaas* is really only the beginnings of the historical Novelle, which Tieck and C. F. Meyer afterwards developed with much erudition and virtuosity; the elaboration of local colour in *Das Erdbeben in Chili* is very slight compared with later Romantic works—but the beginnings at least are made by Kleist.

The word monstrous which has been used to describe the events which occur in Kleist's *Novellen* seems to be the most suitable one to designate with him that element of the 'unusual' which is an essential in all *Novellen*. Under the pressure of events surpassing their comprehension or power of credibility the characters of Kleist, who in themselves are in no way striking or out of the ordinary, develop a greatness or force which gives them a monumental quality, transforms them into exceptional beings. The simple horse-dealer Michael Kohlhaas, under the sting of injustice, acquires a significance not only in the life of the state but in his own eyes, so that he can announce himself as the archangel Michael, whose task it is to establish justice on earth. The Marquise von O. in the face of a situation which is not only incomprehensible to her but also the cause of her repudiation by her parents, undertakes a course of action, which exposes her to the mockery and contempt of the world, but re-establishes her own self-respect: 'Durch diese schöne Anstrengung mit sich selbst bekannt gemacht, hob sie sich plötzlich, wie an ihrer eignen Hand, aus der ganzen Tiefe, in welche das Schicksal sie herabgestürzt hatte, empor'.

The changes which this form of the *Novelle* has undergone in Kleist's treatment of it may be summarized as follows. The idea of the *Novelle* as a form of social entertainment is entirely discarded, and with it the sense of a narrator who is present and narrates to a society of his equals. The *Novellen* of Kleist come like a voice out of the void and re-echo into emptiness.

The subject matter is shifted from the contemporary and familiar (sublimated gossip) into an exotic distance of place or time. It has certainly in itself interest and

power to hold the attention of the reader, but its specific quality is due to the fact that the incident in every case serves as an illustration of the metaphysical problem of Kleist's relation to the universe, which is basically that of an agonized questioning and seeking for certainty. Thus all the characters are faced with problems which shake their credibility and faith in their world order to the utmost. As in Goethe's Novelle therefore the external events have an inward significance. As regards the external form Kleist retains the characteristics of the genre: all the stories have a central idea, round which all the action is grouped, and a 'Wendepunkt' or Pointe, at which the action develops in a different direction: in *Michael Kohlhaas* the turning-point is the interview with Luther; in *Die Marquise von O.* it is the point at which the heroine resists the attempts of her parents to take her children from her and determines to act on her own initiative. The element of novelty, of the unusual, is with Kleist strained to the utmost, and the whole range which the Novelle can cover may be estimated by comparing Goethe's *Ferdinand und Ottilie*, where 'das Unerhörte' consists in a bureau opening without a key, with *Das Erdbeben in Chili*, where an earthquake is required to save the lives of two lovers who have been condemned to death. The irrational element, which is an essential of the Novelle, is no longer the equivalent of chance, as revealed in the event, but is conceived as the incomprehensible, irresponsible forces of the universe, which break into the ordered life of man and shake his faith in existence. It is clear then that the scope of the Novelle both in subject matter and emotional content has been enormously widened by Kleist; indeed to such an extent that the original intention of the genre,

but not its outward form, has been completely lost sight of. Though Kleist's treatment of the Novelle is too individual to be susceptible of further development by any other poet—indeed it seems hardly possible that any development along those lines could take place without falling into caricature—it revealed the fact that the Novelle might be treated in a manner other than the traditional one. It showed the possibility of opening the genre to other themes and other treatment, a possibility which was immediately exploited by the Romantics.

Chapter IV

THE ROMANTIC NOVELLE

Kleist's Novellen, as has been shown in the former chapter, forsake the idea of social entertainment, to restrict themselves to the individual and his relation to fate. Though they are no longer concerned with the ethical code of organized society—both Michael Kohlhaas and the Marquise von O. take up a stand outside of ordered society and Michael Kohlhaas, indeed, is the avenger of the idea of justice upon society, like Karl Moor and Götz von Berlichingen—yet these Novellen are concerned with man as a responsible ethical being, capable of self-control and self-mastery and resenting precisely in the incomprehensible forces of the universe, their irresponsible nature, as something hostile to the ethical responsibility which he feels for himself. That is to say, that Kleist still holds, though upon a basis which is no longer so secure, the ethical standpoint of the German classics: the moral responsibility of man and hence his power of self-determination are still maintained. The incomprehensible and irresponsible forces in the universe batter against this centre of self-determination but they do not destroy it. It was left for the Romantics, beginning with Tieck, to introduce the element of the strange and unusual in the *Novelle* under a new guise. This element which in the Novellen of Goethe had appeared as chance, in those of Kleist as 'the monstrous', appears with the Romantics in the guise of the supernatural, and with the assault of the supernatural upon the human personality the dissolution of ethical responsibility begins.

With the Romantics the whole relationship of man to the universe had changed. He was no longer the centre to which everything had reference, but a mere spot in the universe in which various obscure forces crossed; and the core of his being was not that conscious self-determining will of the *Aufklärung* and the Classics, but as it were an irresponsible something which was akin to the irresponsible forces in the universe outside of himself: a traitor in the camp of reason, who was always ready to betray man to the forces of unreason without. Hermann Pongs in his *Grundlagen der deutschen Novellendichtung im 19 Jahrhundert* writes: 'Man does not will, the "It" in the soul of man wills. This "It" is stronger than man as a conscious being, extends in some way into the secrets of nature and the powers of fate. This is the basic form in which the Romantics experience life which creates its specific form in the Romantic Novelle'.¹ For the *Aufklärung*, for Goethe and Schiller, man was like an island of self-determination, defending his inviolability against the ocean of irrational and irresponsible forces which threatened the integrity of his being; but the Romantics had discovered that, in the very centre of that island, by submarine passages the ocean had found an entrance and formed an inland sea there whose waters rose and fell with the tides of the ocean without. And strange to say, it was no longer the firm land of the island, contrasting so reassuringly with the unstable, unreliable waters outside, that the Romantics prized; but precisely that inland sea, whose waters were so fluctuating, but so intimately connected with the ocean that surrounded them. The irrational elements of the universe without have been recognized as having their existence in man as well: no longer

the contrast between man, the self-determining, and the irrational forces of the universe is stressed, as it appears still in Kleist's Novellen; but the similarity between the irrational forces of the universe and man, within whose being they are as powerful as in the external world of happenings. The irrational element in the universe is now seen under the aspect of the supernatural and as such has absolute power over the nature and conduct of man. The struggle against the irrational, the resistance of the self against determination from without is abandoned: the enemy is welcomed and made an ally. Clearly the Novelle, which in its very nature is concerned with the irrational elements in life, whose poetic task it is to give form to the unaccountable element of chance in its effect upon the human character, was a form specially suited for this Romantic view of life; just as the drama was peculiarly unsuited for it. In the drama man appears as self-determining, creating the event by the exercise of his will; in the Novelle he appears as the being whose fate is determined by the impact of an external event—it is only a heightening of this conception to see him as the mere plaything of external and incomprehensible forces.

With the inrush of these supernatural, daemonic forces into the life of man and the presentation of them in the Novellendichtung of the Romantics another modification of the Novelle takes place, parallel to that brought about by Kleist, but again different from it. Kleist, as has been shown, widened the scope of the Novelle both as regards subject matter and emotional content. For him the characteristic element of the Novelle, the 'aliquid novi', took the form of the monstrous, but still the monstrous within the limits of the natural: and indeed in *Die Marquise von*

O. and in *Der Zweikampf* the whole conflict within the personality of the characters turns upon the ability to transform the apparently unnatural into the comprehensibly natural. In the Romantic Novellen, of Tieck and Hoffmann above all, the 'aliquid novi' takes the form of the supernatural, which is in its very essence insusceptible of natural and rational explanation. The supernatural forces from without take possession of the human soul, devastate or destroy it. There is no protagonist to set up a defence against them: the forces rage themselves out. Where in Goethe's Novellen and those of Kleist still the circle of the action is closed with the achievement of comprehension or self-mastery on the part of the hero or heroine, in the Romantic Novellen it is left open, because no comprehension of the supernatural is possible. The antithesis of 'closed' and 'open' form is used here not in respect of the external form or construction of the Novelle, but of its content: in respect of the conflict which is the emotional core of the Novelle.

Before an account of individual writers of Romantic Novellen is given it may be useful to summarize the modifications which the genre undergoes in their use of it. The idea of the Novelle as a form of social entertainment is, as with Kleist, abandoned; so too that aspect of it which may be 'described as 'sublimated gossip'. Its subject matter is no longer taken from the contemporary and local world, but from the world of the imagination: it is fantastic just as Kleist's subject matter was exotic. This does not necessarily mean that all realistic elements are abandoned: in practice it does amount to this with Tieck but not with Hoffmann and Arnim. Further, the incident, which the Novelle relates, will of course have

value in itself as event, as happening, capable of arousing interest and excitement; but it will also have importance as conveying some inner significance. Just as in Goethe's Novellen the essence of the incident narrated was found in some ethical idea; in Kleist in the illustration of metaphysical problems: so in the Novellen of the Romantics the inner significance is usually to be found in the light which the event narrated throws upon man's relation to the forces of nature, and above all to such forces which appear as mysterious and inexplicable. Setting out from the connection—not the contrast—between man and the irrational forces of the universe, the Romantic Novelle is concerned with his relation to those forces. It therefore assigns a much greater importance to external nature and the description of external nature than will be found in the earlier Novellen. In Boccaccio, for instance, all the descriptions of nature are relegated to the framework, but here indeed shorter or longer descriptions of the sunrise or sunset are given for each day. The narrator as such feels that descriptive passages are alien to his task. In Kleist's Novellen nature plays no part except in the description of the morning after the earthquake (*Das Erdbeben in Chili*); and even here the description of the happy valley in which all the refugees are assembled is rather a lyrical mood than a landscape. In Goethe's earlier Novellen nature description is absent, though in the Novelle itself it assumes considerable importance. Again, the sharp clear-cut silhouette of the classical Novelle—the outline which is projected by the incident itself—gives way to less definite contours, which may be formed not so much by the event as by the lyrical mood or Stimmung, the conveying of which is the real aim of

the Novelle. Contrary to the accepted theory of the Novelle, which separates it definitely from the fairy tale or the legend, the Romantic Novelle, by its acceptance of the supernatural, tends to shift the action from the real world into a world of the imagination; and further it admits a much freer play of fancy, and demands a less consistent logicity in the events. In fact, as far as the original and strict form of the Novelle is concerned, it may be said that if Kleist violated it, the Romantic Novelle ignored it, retaining only the mere externals and heightening and extending the element of the unusual—by transforming it into the supernatural—to such an extent that it becomes the dominating characteristic.

The earliest example of the Romantic Novelle is *Der blonde Eckbert* by Ludwig Tieck, which appeared originally in 1796. Already in this, the most famous of all Tieck's stories, most of the characteristics above described are apparent. It is concerned with an old woman who lived in the middle of a wood, with a bird that laid jewels and pearls and sang a song about Waldeinsamkeit, and a little dog called Strohmi; with a girl called Bertha, who was brought up by the old woman, but, in the absence of her protectress one day, stole the bird, ran away and afterwards married a knight called 'der blonde Eckbert'. Years afterwards she narrates the story of her youth to a friend of her husband, who reveals the fact that he knows the whole story already, whereupon Bertha is taken ill and dies. Eckbert shoots the friend and thereupon discovers that the friend and the old woman were one and the same person and that Bertha was his own sister.

An attempt to apply Heyse's test of the Novelle to *Der*

blonde Eckbert must necessarily fail, for the events have so little logical connection that, isolated from the feeling which carries them, they appear meaningless and non-sensical. The actual silhouette or characteristic quality of the story is given better than in any summary of incident, by the single 'Stimmungs' word 'Waldeinsamkeit'.

But perhaps more than any other single Romantic work, *Der blonde Eckbert* reveals that aspect of man's nature which was the discovery of the Romantics, and distinguishes the Romantic human being from the human being as conceived by the Aufklärung and Goethe and Schiller. It is with this aspect of man, the ethically irresponsible element in him which is akin to the irresponsible forces of nature without, that these Romantic Novellen are concerned—that point in man, at which, below the surface of his conscious self-determining self, the forces of nature alone are powerful and determining. Tieck continued to write stories of this kind, though without the same unique expressiveness, during the next fifteen years. They were then published together with other works between 1812 and 1816 in a framework Novelle entitled *Phantasus*. As far as the narrative works in this collection are concerned they consist of: *Der blonde Eckbert*, 1796; *Die schöne Magelone*, *Der getreue Eckart*, 1799; *Der Runenberg*, 1802; *Liebeszauber*, 1811; *Die Elfen*, 1811; *Der Pokal*, 1811. Not all of these stories are of equal importance, nor can they all, by any sort of extension of the term, be called Novellen. *Die schöne Magelone* is the retelling of a mediaeval romance, interspersed very freely with romantic lyrics; *Der getreue Eckart* is a fusion of two mediaeval legends, Eckart and Tannhäuser, without great success, and certainly without that concentration

upon one theme which the *Novelle* demands. After *Der blonde Eckbert* the most successful and most characteristic story is that of *Der Runenberg*, where again the connection between the inner life of man and the forces of nature is very definitely stressed. It is the theme, which appears again and again in Romantic literature, of the human being who has vowed himself to nature under some guise or other and is then claimed by nature when he attempts to break his allegiance. It occurs with various modifications in Hoffmann's *Bergwerke zu Falun*, in Fouqué's *Undine* and in Pierre Loti's *Pêcheur d'Islande*. The other stories in *Phantásus* have supernatural elements in various degrees, terrifying in *Liebeszauber*, charming and fairy-like in *Die Elfen*. The two stories, *Der blonde Eckbert* and *Der Runenberg*, are the best, no doubt because they present the characteristic attitude of Tieck to external nature as of something incomprehensible and sinister to man, with which however he is united by close though unfathomable ties. In the latter of the two stories certainly the influence of Tieck's friend Steffens, a student of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, can be traced.

A word now about the framework *Novelle Phantásus* as such. It seems clear from what has been said of the origin and nature of the *Novelle* that the framework fiction is not a merely arbitrary addition to the *Novelle*, but represents some intrinsic element: namely, the actual presence of the narrator. *Novellen* are stories told by somebody to a group of other persons, and this fact is never lost sight of: in the original examples of the *Novelle* indeed it determines its tone and form. This framework need not necessarily be so constructed as to

contain a whole group of Novellen (the cyclical framework), though this is its original form, and as such it appears in the *Arabian Nights* and in older Indian collections of stories. It may simply be the framework for one story, as it is frequently used by Meyer and Storm—never by Kleist: that is to say, the fiction is employed that not the author himself is the teller of the story but some other person. Thus in the printed book the idea is preserved of a story-teller telling his story to some one person or group of persons who are also present; and this, as has been shown, is an essential quality of epic form: the listener is aware of both subject and object, and watches the poet constructing his story as he listens. That awareness on his part, that it is a story that is being told and not a piece of life which is being placed before him, is a condition of the modified intensity of emotion which the epic can arouse as compared with the drama.

In the cyclical framework form, the framework itself is capable of a variety of treatment. It may be of the barest kind, serving merely to supply a superficial connection between the stories told, and pass the rôle of narrator from one person to another. In the *Decamerone*, apart from the introduction, and the continual stressing of the orderliness of procedure each day, it is not much more than this; the ten young people are not very definitely distinguished, though Dioneo who is the wag, and stipulates from the beginning that he shall have the right to choose his own subject, always tells the most outrageous stories. But the framework can of course be elaborated to a very considerable extent, so that it forms, apart from the stories it contains, a story in itself. The most perfect example of this is to be found in Keller's *Das Sinngedicht*,

which is a masterpiece of framework narrative and Novellen literature altogether. But the same elaboration of the framework can be seen in Hauff's groups of fairy tales, *Die Karawane* and *Das Wirtshaus im Spessart*, and in Tieck's *Phantasmus*. But here it must be said that Tieck reveals only a modified appreciation of the framework technique. The framework itself was not written until 1811, and was merely a piece of literary job work to serve as an excuse for including a great deal of disparate matter in one volume. A number of friends meet, partly by chance, partly by arrangement, at a country house; very lengthy conversations take place and, in the course of these, it is suggested that every member of the party shall contribute something to the general entertainment. This they all agree to do, for they have very fortunately all brought manuscripts with them, which they then read aloud: and not only do they read stories, but when these have come to an end they read whole plays, some of them of considerable length. Thus with the reading from manuscript the *raison d'être* of the framework form partly breaks down. The preservation of the 'tone' proper to the society addressed, which is one of the functions of the framework Novelle, is neglected, for the story is already written when the story-teller presents it to his audience, and there can therefore be no question of his adapting himself to the requirements of the society before him. In effect, in the framework of *Phantasmus* some of the listeners do protest against the unsuitability of the stories.

In his introduction to his collected works which began to appear in 1828 Tieck wrote:

After a number of years having the intention of collecting my scattered writings, the idea came to me in the leisure of

my country life, to enliven this collection by the introduction of characters who carry on a conversation, in the same manner as many writers of Novellen have done. This framework, which could bring many things to discussion, was to become a novel on a small scale, by means of love, abduction, difference of opinion and embarrassments of manifold kinds and to end with the reconciliation and the marriage of various members of the group.... It was part of the plan to introduce into the connecting conversations criticism playful as well as serious of the various types of poetry, of fairy tales, love poetry, humour, the fantastic and so on.... The seven narrators have various characteristics and were intended to indicate various moods of the author himself, serious and gay, enthusiastic and humorous, descending even to the pedantic.²

It must be conceded that the differentiation between the various story-tellers is very consistently maintained, even to details of behaviour, and an attempt at least is made to assign to each one a story suitable to his particular temperament. But the slight love story contained in the framework is of such minor importance as almost to escape the reader's attention: whilst the conversations on aesthetic and literary questions which connect the stories are prolix in the extreme and the transitions from them to the actual stories are somewhat laboured. The Novellen of Tieck's later period, to be discussed in the next chapter, bear very little resemblance to his earlier stories, and would seem to derive to a great extent from the discursive method employed in dealing with the story contained in the framework itself, namely in a minimizing of the actual incident in favour of lengthy discussion. The effect of the best of the stories contained in *Phantastus* is not heightened but diminished by the laborious and wordy framework in which they are set.

To sum up Tieck's effect upon the form of the Novelle during this early period of his literary activity, it may be said that he widens the scope of the subject matter and emotional appeal by the introduction of the supernatural, but thereby affects the form so radically—more radically even than Kleist—as to create practically a new form, which may be described as 'open' compared with the 'closed' form of the classical Novelle. Kleist's treatment of the Novelle hardly admits of any further development along his own line; though in *Michael Kohlhaas* he initiated the Character Novelle which afterwards becomes a fairly recognizable type. Tieck's innovations however open up possibilities in various directions. The supernatural with him consists largely in the mysterious relations between nature and the irrational element in man; and these relations are represented usually as being of a sinister kind, as though man were subjected to a force which was in essence malevolent. The supernatural is exploited by other writers of Romantic Novellen; notably by E. T. A. Hoffmann and Ludwig Achim von Arnim, but with other aspects stressed; and the relationship between man and nature in less sinister form by Joseph, Freiherr von Eichendorff.

Tieck's activities as a writer of Novellen came to an end temporarily in 1811, and when he took up the genre again he had ceased to be a Romantic poet and composed works which, in many respects, were a repudiation of his earlier views. In 1808, however, Hoffmann's first Novelle, *Ritter Gluck*, appeared and from that date until the middle of the 1820's the Romantic Novelle was at its height in the works of Hoffmann, Arnim, Brentano and Eichendorff. Of all these writers Hoffmann is the most

important from the point of view of the *Novelle*. His works, apart from the two long novels *Die Elixiere des Teufels* and *Kater Murr* (unfinished), consist almost entirely of *Novellen* and fairy tales and are contained in three collections: *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–15), *Nachtstücke* (1817) and *Die Serapionsbrüder* (1819–21). The last is a framework *Novelle* of considerable dimensions which owes something to the *Phantastus* of Tieck. As with the latter work the framework was constructed *a posteriori* to include individual *Novellen* and fairy tales which had already appeared. The title requires some explanation. A number of friends, most of whom have recognizable prototypes in the friends of Hoffmann, meet by chance in Berlin after having been separated for years by the Napoleonic wars and agree to foregather once a week in a *Weinhaus* and entertain each other with conversations and stories. Unlike all other framework *Novellen* this one introduces a society of men only—a circumstance which is not without its bearing upon the ‘tone’ of the *Novelle* and the conversations. At the first meeting Cyprian relates an experience of his own: his acquaintance with a certain Graf P. who believed himself to be the anchorite Serapion, who suffered martyrdom in the Thebaide under the Roman Emperor Decius. The Graf is so convinced of the truth of his obsession that he lives in fact the life of the anchorite, and converts the world of his actual surroundings into the world of his imagination. The anchorite, opines one of the society, was a genuine poet, he had really beheld that which he declared, and therefore his speech was convincing for heart and feeling. That no one should relate a story which he had not inwardly intensely visualized is ac-

cepted as the principle of their story-telling: 'das Serapiontische Prinzip'. The conversations of the framework, which does not in itself constitute a Novelle, turn entirely upon literary, musical, aesthetic questions and the problem of supernatural and semi-supernatural phenomena; the conversation leading nearly always by perfectly natural transitions to the telling of a story which illustrates or illuminates in some way the matter under discussion.

The stories of Hoffmann may conveniently be divided into three groups according to their subject matter: (1) stories presenting a straightforward narrative of events—*Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, *Meister Martin der Kufner und seine Gesellen*, *Meister Johannes Wacht*, *Doge und Dogaresa*; (2) stories dealing with supernatural or semi-supernatural happenings—*Rat Krespel*, *Das Majorat*, *Der Sandmann*, *Die Bergwerke zu Falun*, *Der Kampf der Sänger*, *Der Elementargeist*; and (3) fairy tales—*Der goldene Topf*, *Klein Zaches*, *Das fremde Kind*, *Nussknacker und Mäusekönig*, *Meister Floh*.

Ricarda Huch in her book on the Romantic Movement distinguishes between 'exotische' and 'nüchterne' tales of Hoffmann and points out that though examples of the latter type, notably *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* and *Meister Martin*, are praised in histories of literature as his best works and first-rate in their kind, though they are superior to those of the former type in unity, severity of form, and comprehensibility, yet the lover of poetry, like Hoffmann himself, will always prefer the 'Exotische' as giving the real essence of Hoffmann's being.³ It may, however, be pointed out here in connection with the use of the word 'exotisch' for certain of Hoffmann's stories, that whereas in the stories of straightforward happenings

the action is nearly always placed either in the historical past or in foreign countries, the action of the supernatural stories and the fairy tales is with few exceptions anchored in the actual world in which Hoffmann lived, from which it floats upward to develop itself in a world of pure fantasy.

Indeed, though the supernatural is not exclusively the subject matter of Hoffmann's tales, yet it plays so important a part in them that it may justifiably be regarded as the characteristic element of his imagination. Even in those works in which it does not find a place the events and characters are often of so strange and monstrous a nature as to arouse the same sort of emotional reaction as that to which the supernatural gives rise. In this respect Hoffmann resembles Kleist. In Hoffmann's finest Novelle—*Das Fräulein von Scuderi*—the principal character, the goldsmith Cadillac, is psychologically monstrous, in the sense in which we have used the word to describe Kleist's Novellen. It forms an interesting parallel—as a Character Novelle—to the *Michael Kohlhaas* of Kleist, and reveals a characteristic which illuminates the different ethical standpoint of Kleist and the pure Romantic Hoffmann: Michael Kohlhaas is the self-determining Willensmensch, who proceeds to deeds of outlawry and violence from an inner ethical and volitional principle; Cadillac is a man of instinct, who carries out his crimes in blind obedience to an obscure impulse, which, as Hoffmann takes care to explain, is due to prenatal influences. As in the characters of Tieck's Novellen, and indeed in the Romantic characters generally, it is the irresponsible element in man which is stressed; Cadillac commits his crimes because he cannot help doing so.

The supernatural in Hoffmann appears under various forms—rarely under the form of the mysterious forces of nature itself, as we have seen it in Tieck frequently as magnetization, hallucinations, automatism, divided personality, ghosts and revenants. But the most characteristic form for Hoffmann is that which is presented as connected with art, and more especially with music.

Something must be said here about Hoffmann as a personality in order to explain the world of his Novellen. He was like Kleist and Hölderlin a 'problematische Natur', and like them, though in a different way, he went to pieces in the conflict between ideal and reality. His life was tragic like theirs, but it had this quality which distinguished it from that of his co-sufferers and perhaps obscures the tragedy—the element of the grotesque. He was a little comic-looking man, and as such he appears himself in various disguises in a number of his works. The conflict between reality and the ideal begets in him the ironic attitude to life, which appearing in most of his works, yet finds its most complete expression in that dualism in his novel *Kater Murr*—on the one hand the idealistic but overstrained hero Kreisler, on the other hand the philistine self-satisfaction of the Cat. Before he devoted himself to writing as his main artistic activity, Hoffmann had been a professional musician and composer. He was for some time director of the opera at Bamberg, he was a music critic of much insight and originality, being one of the first to recognize the greatness of Beethoven's later work, and possessing so great an admiration for Mozart that he adopted Mozart's second name Amadeus in the place of his own less attractive Wilhelm. He himself composed a number of musical works, in-

cluding an opera *Undine*, which have some claim to be regarded as works of importance. In addition to his very special musical gifts, which entitle him to be regarded as something more than a mere dilettante, he was an artist of considerable merit, and was particularly skilful as a caricaturist. It will be seen, therefore, that art plays a very important part in his psychological make-up, and represents for him the irrational, daemonic forces in life which for Tieck and for Eichendorff, though in a different form, are represented by external nature. Art, and more particularly music, is the channel through which the daemonic, incalculable forces of the universe burst in upon the ordinary, calculable life of man, with an elemental force, and set up tremendous upheavals of the personality. It appears thus in the first two Novellen of the *Phantasiestücke*, *Ritter Gluck* and *Don Juan*, in *Rat Krespel*, in *Der Kampf der Sänger*, and above all in the unfinished novel *Kater Murr*; in other Novellen such as *Die Jesuitenkirche zu G.* the art of painting is represented in the same way.

It is usual to consider these Romantic works as something definitely unrealistic. At the end of the Romantic period the histories of literature set the beginnings of realism as the reaction, the antithesis of the Romantic cultivation of the imaginary and fantastic. And this is no doubt broadly true, more especially in regard to the early Romantic poets such as Novalis and Tieck. Yet at least in Tieck's fantastic comedies, the element of satire, directed against the Aufklärung and the Philistertum of his contemporaries, has certain realistic qualities. It is true that in the early Novellen of Tieck there are no traces of realism: the world in which the action of *Der blonde Eckbert* and *Der Runenberg* takes place has no counterpart in

the world of actual things. But the same thing is not true of Hoffmann, nor indeed of many of the later Romantics: realistic elements are present in abundance. And it is most characteristic of Hoffmann's art and in particular of his use of the marvellous, i.e. supernatural, that he nearly always starts from a realistic basis. He describes with exactness and detail the streets of Berlin or Dresden of his day, in which the typical figures of contemporary life are seen moving about, and here in this familiar setting and to these familiar figures he allows the supernatural to happen. One of the most characteristic works of Hoffmann for an understanding of his methods is *Der goldene Topf*. Here we have two sets of happenings: that which takes place on the level of everyday life, and that which takes place in a fairy-tale world of marvels. The connecting element between the two worlds is formed by the characters themselves, who are the inhabitants of both worlds, and become transformed from ordinary men and women—the old apple-woman, the professor, the three daughters—into doorknockers, magicians, golden serpents and what not. Similar works to *Der goldene Topf* are the two fairy tales with realistic setting *Klein Zaches* and *Meister Floh*. *Klein Zaches* is the story of a little misshapen creature, who has been blessed by a fairy in such a way that everything done in his presence, which is in any way meritorious or distinctive, is attributed by all present to him. The irony of the situation is from the beginning apparent.

It has been pointed out that Hoffmann, like Hölderlin and Kleist, goes to pieces in the conflict between reality and the ideal. It is important for a proper appreciation of his art to realize that, under the grotesque and what he

himself calls 'das Skurrile', tragical problems are being debated similar to those in the Novellen or dramas of Kleist. The tormented soul of Hoffmann, which is incapable of taking up the heroic pose or expressing itself in the pathos of despair, infuses its distress into the grotesque figures which move through the pages of *Kater Murr* and the Novellen, and it is noticeable that he is most successful in the drawing of the eccentric characters who in spite of outstanding gifts as musicians or artists live on the borderland of madness. So that stories of fantastic and inexplicable happenings, which would appear to be the arbitrary inventions of a purely objective fantasy, afford another example of that quality of the Novelle, which Friedrich Schlegel had already pointed out: its ability by the very fact that it tends to be objective to express a lyrical and subjective emotion in symbolical and indirect form. This is as true of Hoffmann as it is of Kleist: and different though their Novellen may be in many externals, they have this in common that they represent an attempt at an 'Auseinandersetzung' with a world which, to the tormented soul of the poet, presents problems which admit of no solution.

The characteristic form for Hoffmann—that in which his most personal and essential qualities are most clearly expressed—is the fairy tale set not entirely in a world of the imagination, but primarily in the world of reality. He requires this contrast of reality and imagination to produce his characteristic effects and to convey that sense of dualism in the world which, half tragic, half grotesque, torments him. Yet it would be a mistake to accord to Hoffmann quite the same tragic significance as to Kleist. Whereas for Kleist the monstrous is utilized merely as an

extreme instance of the irrationality and irresponsibility of the universe, and applied as a test to the characters in order to demonstrate their power of maintaining themselves in the face of such inexplicable horrors; for Hoffmann the monstrous event is in itself and intrinsically a matter of interest and importance: the stress is laid rather upon the event than upon the effect it has upon the characters. That is to say, that Hoffmann, there can be no doubt, employs the monstrous also for its own sake—there is in him something of the aesthetically inferior intention ‘to make our flesh creep’, nor does he always escape the danger of exploiting the gruesome and the monstrous in a manner which seems to have no artistic justification. Yet he is, in spite of that, more of the artist, less of the poet than Kleist; Kleist’s subjects one feels have importance for him—indeed he himself says so—only in so far as they enable him to express the feelings which are distressing him; for Hoffmann, the artist, the subjects have in themselves an interest, and he works at them, not only in order to express through them his *Weltanschauung*, but also with the pleasure of the artist in giving form to his subject matter.

Though there is no attempt in Hoffmann’s tales to explain away the supernatural element rationalistically, it is usually open to explanation on subjective lines, and is frequently motivated in the psychology of the principal character: thus in *Der Sandmann* in which the hero’s fear of reality is accounted for by certain impressions of his childhood. The fact that he falls in love with an automatic doll one may assume to be a romantic symbol of his inability to deal with the ordinary life of humanity, though it certainly has also ironic value as a satire upon the

society in which he moved. The stories abound in characters who live in a world of illusion, which is presented with such intensity that the border-line between the natural and the supernatural is never plain. With Hoffmann as with the early Tieck the element of the unexpected, 'das Unerhörte', in the Novelle assumes so much importance as to become the predominant feature, indeed, instead of being one point in the story, to have absorbed the whole subject matter. This exploitation of the supernatural and the quasi-supernatural then is one of the contributions of Hoffmann to the Novelle; another is his use of fairy-tale elements in connection with a purely realistic background or basis; a third is his predilection for the artist—whether musician, painter or goldsmith—as his main character, so that he is to a certain extent the originator of the Künstlernovelle which is cultivated in our own day by Thomas Mann in *Tristan* and *Der Tod in Venedig*. Further Hoffmann introduces a new element, one perhaps alien to the form of the Novelle in the strictest sense, in his use of satirical criticism of contemporary conditions, an element which is afterwards cultivated excessively by Tieck in his later Novellen.

Akin to Hoffmann's Novellen in some respects but without the intensity of emotional content, the tragic-grotesque presentation of inward conflicts, but nevertheless veiling a subjective mood in an apparently arbitrarily chosen fantastic subject matter, is the Novelle of Adalbert von Chamisso, *Peter Schlemihl* (1814). In this one work by which he is still remembered the author gives in symbolical form a description of his own unrooted existence, of the man without a fatherland who feels himself as much an alien amongst ordinary beings as the man without a

shadow in his Novelle. Like Hoffmann, Chamisso starts from a realistic basis: his hero walks the streets of Hamburg, calls at the country house, is careful to wipe the dust from his shoes before he rings the bell—the opening of the story might be the opening of a contemporary Novelle dealing with the most prosaic facts of existence. Into this apparently everyday tale breaks the whole world of romantic fairy and folk tale marvels with the devil who offers him the never-empty purse of Fortunatus and buys from him his shadow.

The use of folk and fairy tale elements and folk superstitions is a recognizable element in the Novellen of the Romantic writers and is indeed one of the features of Romantic literature in Germany generally. It plays an important rôle in the works of Arnim, Brentano and Eichendorff. Arnim's Novellen belong for the greater part to the later period of his literary career. His most famous work in this genre *Isabella von Aegypten* appeared in 1812, *Der tolle Invalide auf dem Fort Ratonneau* in 1818, *Fürst Ganzgott und Sänger Halbgott* not until 1835. Arnim is a story-teller who is moved by no such profound motives as Kleist or Hoffmann, and has no such individual view of life to express in his stories of magic, mystery or marvel: it is the delight in the many coloured wealth of incident which stimulates his imagination and stirs his 'Lust zu fabulieren'.

In the poetical genius of Arnim there is a lack of unity, a failure to persevere in a single definite direction. He was at the same time a skilled resuscitator of the past, particularly of the past of Germany at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation; an exploiter of the world of magic and fantastic dreams, and a writer con-

cerned with ethical problems and the criticism of society. All these various interests and pre-occupations conflict and result in a confusion of effect, so that even in his best work, as for instance in *Isabella von Aegypten*, no single striking impression is produced. In this Novelle as in his unfinished novel *Die Kronenwächter*, he reveals the power of recreating the historic past not so much in the presentation of important events as in the detailed vision of ordinary life. Ricarda Huch says of him that he was able to manipulate the stage setting of the Middle Ages or of any such highly coloured distant period so as to construct beautiful and even moving tableaux.⁴ In *Die Majoratsherren* he conjures up a world of magic and imagination akin to that of Hoffmann, but one in which the intrusion of ethical problems only acts as a disturbing factor in the basic impression. He believes, like Hoffmann, in another world which is in some sense more real and intense than the world which is revealed by the senses. But the two worlds are not identified to the same extent as they are with Hoffmann. For Arnim they remain distinct; only the imagination is the mediator between the two, and can bring messages from the one for the solace or delectation of the other. In some of his Novellen, as in *Mistress Lee* and in his novel *Gräfin Dolores*, he is entirely concerned with ethical problems, pre-eminently the conflict between marriage and the freedom of passionate love. The action of his stories is laid almost exclusively in the past—a past which for him possessed a greater variety and wealth of forms before the French Revolution reduced everything to a drab unity. In *Isabella von Aegypten* he describes the sixteenth century in Brabant; in *Raphael und seine Nachbarinnen* Italy of the Renaissance; in *Die drei liebreichen*

Schwestern und der glückliche Färber Amsterdam and Prussia at the beginning of the eighteenth century; in *Die Genueserin Angelika und Cosmus, der Seilspringer* the Rococo period in Germany. His subject matter is treated with a freedom of imagination and of external form which causes one of his critics to describe the effect as arabesque. Discussing the formlessness of the modern Novelle, Paul Ernst says: 'With regard to the Novelle the only possibility of artistic form which I personally can see is that of the arabesque, as it was first created by Arnim, as the best example of which I should cite *Isabella von Aegypten*'.⁵

It is interesting to note that Paul Heyse definitely excludes this particular story from his collection of Novellen because of its formlessness, and chooses instead *Der tolle Invalide auf dem Fort Ratonneau*, which does indeed conform more nearly to the standard type of Novelle as Paul Heyse was at pains to define it, his attention being directed mainly upon outward form and construction. Both these stories of Arnim are stories of fantastic happenings, the former enriched by episodic folk-lore incidents: mandrake, Golem and Bärenhäuter, and having seemingly no justification beyond its own power to charm and hold the attention by its sheer fantasy. In *Der tolle Invalide*, however, the incidents serve as an illustration to the idea which is then expressed in words explicitly at the end of the story: 'Liebe treibt den Teufel aus'. The half-crazy veteran who holds the fort and terrorizes the city for days on end is at last subdued by the courageous love of his wife, who exposes herself unprotected to his homicidal attacks.

Arnim's Novellen, in spite of the excessive praise which Heine awarded them, an opinion which has been

repeated in more modern times by Wilhelm Dilthey, have not the same power to hold the interest of readers to-day as those of Hoffmann, for they have not the same intensity of emotional experience informing them. Nor does Arnim's prose style contribute to make them popular: it is hurried, breathless and without repose, so that the reader is quickly wearied. With the exception of *Isabella von Aegypten* and *Der tolle Invalide* they are little known. Arnim's contribution to the form of the Novelle can hardly be regarded as individual but merely partakes of the general characteristics of the Romantic Novelle. He utilizes the Romantic elements of folk tale and folk superstition; in works such as *Raphael und seine Nachbarinnen* he carries on the Romantic tradition of the Künstlernovelle, creating in this particular work a forerunner of Mörike's more delicately conceived *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*. His most individual trait lies in his tendency to embroider the strict narrative with a wealth of arabesque tracery.

A more purely fantastic writer than Arnim, one who belonged almost entirely to the world of dreamlike imaginations without the solid basis of reality which Arnim possessed, was his friend and brother-in-law Clemens Brentano, whose prose writings must be classed, as might be expected, almost entirely under the heading of fairy tales. Since these however lie outside the scope of this work, we are left with one Novelle, *Vom braven Kasperl und vom schönen Annerl* (1817), which still enjoys a considerable popularity and has points of interest for the literary historian beyond its intrinsic charm. It is essentially a work of Stimmung, the incidents recorded being subdued to the mood, half other-worldliness, half

poignant grief of the old woman, who relates the story of the misfortunes of her grandson and goddaughter to the poet in the night watches which precede the execution of the unhappy Annerl. The state of mind of the old woman, the sense of the urgent need for action on the part of the poet, felt as a presentiment long before it is clearly pronounced, is conveyed in masterly fashion and disturbed only once by a divagation on the professional writer's vocation. (Similar divagations, more definitely satirical in character, frequently interrupt the narrative in the fairy tales.) Significantly enough for the part editor of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and the enthusiastic collector and imitator of folk songs, the story itself is based upon folk-song subject matter; and the incident of the executioner's axe which stirs in its case in the presence of a person destined to be beheaded, though its inclusion is questionable on aesthetic grounds, belongs also to the world of folk-lore and folk superstition. But it serves to heighten the sense of impending and inavertible fate which hangs over the story. Regarded from the point of subject matter only, without reference to the poetic impression, which is due to the treatment rather than to the facts recorded, Brentano's story may be considered as an early example of the *Dorfgeschichte*, the emergence of which as a definite genre will be discussed later.⁶

The most lyrical of all the Romantic Novellen writers is Joseph, Freiherr von Eichendorff, whose graceful stories are so akin to his nature lyrics that they seem to be a mere recasting of poems in prose form. With him the incident is almost entirely dissolved in *Stimmung* and seems to be no more than a symbolical solidification of the varying moods of nature, as perceived by a poet ex-

quisitely sensitive to every aspect of romantic landscape. Moonlight and the magic of the forest brood upon the action of the stories and call into being strange figures of unearthly and enthralling beauty who are perilous in their attraction: old figures of pagan deities who exert their nocturnal fascination and fade away at daybreak. The folk legend of Tannhäuser and Venus with various modifications forms the basis of the action in *Herbstzauber*, a preliminary sketch as it were to the more successful *Das Marmorbild* (written in 1817 but not published until 1826) and, with an exotic and tropical setting, in *Eine Meerfahrt*, a late work, which never received its final polish, and has only lately been published. In *Die Glücksritter* (1841) and *Schloss Durande* (1837) Eichendorff attempts a more solid background of historical circumstance, the Thirty Years' War in the former and the French Revolution in the latter. Both of them are tragic in their endings, but like the other Novellen they live in the memory not by their incident but by the atmosphere which envelops the action. *Das Marmorbild* has some claim to be regarded as the masterpiece of Eichendorff's narrative works were it not for the perennial charm and freshness of his best-known work, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826). Though it would be pedantic to deny to this work the title of a Novelle, it is in effect as far as its form is concerned rather a novel of adventure writ small—the harshness and violence of incident of such works being toned down to harmless adventures in which only the very naïve hero could possibly see any danger to himself. The whole story is presented with a lightness of touch, an exquisite sense of the ever-changing aspects of landscape, a gaiety and a delicate irony

which saves it from becoming at any point unduly sentimental.

Eichendorff is, with Tieck and Hoffmann, the most original and individual of the Romantic writers of *Novellen*. He excels in the presentation of lyrical moods. Yet he never achieves the same intensity and sinister effects as those which were at Tieck's command. Though he may conjure up malevolent forces their power is not unassailable, and the heroes of his stories who have withstood their magic return to the serene light of day after the night magic has faded. But, apart from these darker aspects of nature mysticism, his presentation of the various moods of nature is more subtly perceived, more exquisitely rendered than anything Tieck can achieve. He has not Hoffmann's power of drawing characters, above all eccentric and grotesque figures, nor the same quality of ironic criticism. None of the characters who pass through the action of his stories is sharply realized and presented as an individual. None, with the possible exception of the Taugenichts, who withholds his name but reveals so much of his feelings, remains in the memory as a recognizable personality. The persons of his stories are themselves lay figures, bearers of lyrical moods; just as his landscapes are lyrical moods and not descriptions. Irony with him has divested itself of its more trenchant qualities and has become no more than a playful touch which corrects at once any tendency to sentimentality.

'Ein Roman nach der lyrischen Seite gebildet' was Schelling's definition of the *Novelle*, and Friedrich Schlegel had stressed the lyrical quality inherent in the genre as such. With Eichendorff this aspect of the *Novelle* is exploited to the full. No further development along this

line is possible or the characteristic outline of the Novelle must inevitably be lost in the mist of lyricism. The creation of Stimmung, which has already been noted in Tieck and Brentano, becomes with Eichendorff the predominant feature of the Novelle and, by its very predominance, cries a halt to this line of development. Where it reappears in the works of later writers, it is as one element only amongst others, until Theodor Storm in his early works makes it again the prevailing one.

Of the other Romantic writers of Novellen none was of sufficient originality to develop new aspects of the genre; they were content to carry on the traditions already in existence and produced works which were for the most part pale imitations of what had already been done with greater originality, charm or force. An exception may perhaps be made in favour of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* (1811) in which the fairy-tale motif of the water-sprite who can acquire a soul only by marriage with a mortal is treated with considerable naïve charm. Lacking in Fouqué, however, was the power which Tieck and Eichendorff possessed of interpenetrating nature forces with human feeling. *Aslauga's Ritter* and *Sintram und seine Gefährten* (inspired by an etching of Albrecht Dürer), the best known of his other stories, are based upon Norse mythology, a source of subject matter which Fouqué exploited without any real success.

Wilhelm Hauff, the Swabian poet, wrote a number of competent and readable Novellen, without however attaining to originality or independence, so that the effect which they make is always that of derivative works. Thus *Othello* and *Die Sängerin* are clearly influenced by Hoffmann; as is also his most successful story, a fantasy rather

than a Novelle, the *Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller* (1827). *Das Bild des Kaisers* (1828), describing the political situation in Germany at the time of the Burschenschaften and contrasting the various attitudes to the figure and fame of Napoleon, would seem in its attempt to present prevailing attitudes of mind to be influenced by the later Novellen of Tieck. *Jud Süß* (1827) is an historical Novelle which gives a stirring and succinct account of the fate of a political schemer with whom a later and more meretricious work of fiction has acquainted the novel-reading public.

Finally Leopold Schefer may be mentioned whose Novellen began to appear in 1825, a writer who achieved considerable popularity in his time with highly coloured stories whose subject matter is taken largely from Italy and the Orient.

The Romantic Novelle had almost disappeared by 1830. The relation of the Romantics to the genre is a paradoxical one. It was Friedrich Schlegel who drew their attention to this definitely Romance genre which by the simplicity and severity of its form is particularly unsuited to the Germanic formlessness of northern Romantic art. Yet cultivated by Romantic writers and modified by them to such an extent as to be almost a new genre it becomes the most popular and successful form of narrative literature of that age. But already in the 1820's, before its Romantic resources had been exhausted, it was being subjected to new modifications and exploited with entirely different aims.

Chapter V

THE DISCURSIVE NOVELLE—TIECK, THE WRITERS OF JUNG DEUTSCHLAND

The Romantic writers beginning with Tieck had considerably enlarged the scope of the *Novelle* both in regard to its subject matter and its content. If the *Novelle* in its original form would seem to be essentially a literary development of the anecdote, it reveals also in its insistence upon the extraordinary and unusual element a kinship with the fairy tale, and Paul Ernst has described it as 'a sister of the fairy tale'. It was this aspect of it, with the possibilities therein contained, which was seized upon by the Romantics. In the works of Tieck and Hoffmann the 'marvellous' spreading from the critical point of the story comes to be the characteristic of the whole story, and the *Novelle* so completely changes its character that far from being an account of everyday events which are just distinguished from the everyday, by an unexpected twist given to them, it is, with the Romantics, an account of events, of which the most striking characteristic is that they do not belong to the ordinary world. Even though Hoffmann builds up his fantastic world upon the world of reality, the effect of his method is to make the reader feel that the fantastic world is the real one, but obscured by the world of everyday, through the mere appearance of which only such happily constituted people as Anselmus in *Der goldene Topf* are able to penetrate in order to attain to reality.

Friedrich Schlegel mentions the potentialities of the *Novelle* for the indirect presentation of subjective moods and points of view, and this aspect of it is likewise exploited by the Romantics with a greater freedom and directness than Schlegel originally intended. It would no doubt be possible to construct a character of Boccaccio from a consideration of the *Novellen* in the *Decamerone*, which would certainly reveal him as a *Lebensbejaher*, an enemy of all hypocrisy and false affectation; a kindly ironist, and above all a believer in the healthy gratification of the senses. But the *Novellen* of Kleist and Hoffmann reveal the characters of their authors with much greater intensity: and what must be carefully put together from the prevailing objective nature of Boccaccio's *Novellen* obtrudes itself in the prevailing subjective nature of the *Novellen* of the Romantic writers. Metaphysical, psychological, ethical elements which, though potentially present in the classical *Novellen*, are subdued, assume the most important place in the *Novellen* of the Romantics.

The *Novelle* is a Romance form; it becomes naturalized in Germany with the Romantics: that is to say, it assumes specifically German characteristics which distinguish it from its Romance prototype. And this naturalization takes place, broadly speaking, when the interest is transferred from the events related to the inner significance of those events, whether that significance be found either in metaphysical, ethical, psychological ideas or even in the conveyance of a mood, a *Stimmung*. Goethe's 'Novelle' developed the idea of the Romance *Novelle* as far as possible, and stands on the border-line between Classical and Romantic: the ethical significance is the real content of the *Novelle* but it is subdued to the narra-

tion of external events, which still ostensibly form the *raison d'être* of the story. In Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert*, written thirty years before, the transition has already been effected and the specifically German characteristic of the *Novelle* established: the events narrated are so arbitrary in their connection one with another that baldly presented—as the writers of classical *Novellen* present them—they would fail to convince, perhaps even to interest. It is the dark current of sinister nature mysticism on which the incidents are carried which impresses, rather than the incidents themselves, and makes of *Der blonde Eckbert* a *Stimmungsnovelle*, just as Eichendorff's *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* is a *Stimmungsnovelle*—the difference in the emotional effect of the two *Novellen* representing the difference in the attitude of the two poets to the world of nature.

It may be noted in passing that a similar change to that which the *Novelle* undergoes in becoming naturalized German, occurs with other literary forms which are adopted by German poets from Romance languages. Thus the adventures and marvels of chivalry in Chrétien de Troyes are merely adventures and marvels; in the German courtly epics the same incidents are all fraught with inner significance.

It can be said then that the Romantic writers established the *Novelle* as a German genre. To deplore the fact that, in so doing, they destroyed the classic severity of form and clearness of outline, is simply to deplore the existence of the German *Novelle* as such. Here clearly the gain is greater than the loss. Kleist shows its capacity for dealing with metaphysical problems, and establishes in *Michael Kohlhaas* the type of the Character *Novelle*; Tieck de-

velops further its irrational elements and makes it the channel for the conveyance of Stimmung; Hoffmann draws the whole realm of the supernatural into its circle; Arnim and Brentano make it the expression of the free play of fancy; Eichendorff all but dissolves it in lyricism. All of them heighten its subjective character. A much greater freedom of subject matter is claimed, and the anchoring of the events in a contemporary and everyday world is not necessarily carried out. In most of the Romantic writers the distinctions between Novelle and fairy tale are disregarded. All these new elements, though for the time being they led to a great confusion and indefiniteness in the form of the Novelle, considerably widened its scope and deepened its potential significance, and later writers of Novellen were able to profit by the gains which the genre had made during this period. But by the end of the 1820's the Romantic Novelle had come to an end, except in the works of unimportant imitators of Hoffmann and Eichendorff and some isolated works of Eichendorff himself.

This modification in the form of the Novelle made by the Romantics is due at least to some extent to the influence of another writer, Miguel de Cervantes, an influence which extends beyond the works of such writers as Hoffmann to the later Novellen of Tieck. For the early Romantics, with their ideas of poetry as a universal expression of the life of man to which every nation contributed its characteristic qualities, Cervantes came to be the representative writer of the novel, in much the same way as Shakespeare became for them the supreme dramatic poet of modern times. When it is further considered that Friedrich Schlegel established the novel as the speci-

fically Romantic literary form, it will be evident that he could not fail to assign very great importance to Cervantes as the author of *Don Quixote*. Further, in his distinction between ancient and modern poetry, he specifies the quality of self-consciousness as the character of modern poetry in opposition to the work of ancient art which came into being as an organic growth. Thus he sees in Cervantes above all the conscious artist, and finds in his writings that irony which was for him one of the most valuable qualities in modern art. With Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe, Cervantes becomes for him the characteristic modern writer; and it is in contact with *Don Quixote* as well as with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* that he develops his theories not only of the novel but also of Romantic poetry generally. In Cervantes' preface to *Don Quixote* indeed many of the Romantic ideas are anticipated. The influence of *Don Quixote*, translated by Tieck, upon the Romantic novel is a question which lies outside the scope of this book, but it may be mentioned here that Friedrich Schlegel's conception of that work—a highly individual and one-sided one—affected the novel-writing of the Romantics to a very considerable extent.

More important for the development of the *Novelle* in German literature was the interest aroused by the *Novelas Ejemplares* of Cervantes. Already in his *Nachrichten von den poetischen Werken des Johannes Boccaccio* Friedrich Schlegel had mentioned them as being of an excellence equal to those of Boccaccio: and though he stresses the subjective tendency of Boccaccio's works as a whole it is in respect of Cervantes' *Novelas* that he enunciates his theory that the *Novelle* is especially suited to present a subjective

mood and point of view indirectly and as it were symbolically. He proceeds:

Why are some amongst the *Novelas* of Cervantes definitely so much more beautiful than others, though all of them are beautiful? By what other magic do they stir our innermost being and take possession of it with divine beauty than by this, that everywhere the feeling of the writer, the very innermost depth of his most individual peculiarity gleams through them visibly-invisibly, or because, as in the '*Curioso impertinente*', he gives expression in them to opinions which by reason of their very peculiarity and depth could not be expressed or only in such a form?¹

It is not without significance that whereas a subjective tendency is postulated by Schlegel for Boccaccio's works as a whole and his *Novelle* are somewhat arbitrarily envisaged from this standpoint in order to support the general argument, it is the *Novelas* of Cervantes which are then put forward as confirmation of the theory that the *Novelle* presents a subjective mood indirectly and symbolically.

This aspect of the *Novelle* in German literature is so frequently stressed and influences the development of the inner form so greatly that it may well be argued that the German *Novelle* owes more of its specific quality to Cervantes, as the originator of the subjective *Novelle*, presenting 'visibly-invisibly' the points of view, and attitude to life of its author, than to the less recognizably subjective *Novellen* of Boccaccio.

The *Novelas Ejemplares* of Cervantes were first published in 1613 and consist of twelve stories of varying length and very diverse character. In his Prologo to the first edition Cervantes definitely states:²

I have bestowed on them the name of 'Exemplary', and if thou dost look well to it, there is not one of them from which thou couldst not derive a profitable example.... One thing I shall adventure me to say: that if by any chance it come to pass that the reading of these novels could tempt anyone, who should peruse them, to any evil desire or thought, rather should I cut off the hand wherewith I wrote them, than bring them out in public.³

The form of the Novelas varies considerably; but with the exception of *La Señora Cornelia*⁴ there is not one of them which bears any resemblance to the Novelle of Boccaccio or of any of the Italian Novellisti. *Rinconete y Cortadillo* is a genre picture of the life of thieves in Seville; *El Celoso Extremeño* is a study in the psychology of a jealous husband; *El Licenciado Vidriera*, which Friedrich Schlegel cites as the most beautiful and witty of the stories which are essentially jokes and witty retorts, differs from the similar stories of Boccaccio, in that it contains a whole collection of witty retorts, whereas Boccaccio's stories in this kind always lead up to one point. This particular Novela falls into two halves, the first of which, the account of the travels of the hero, is quite separate from the second, in which his replies to impertinent questioners are recorded. So little of the formal quality of the Italian Novelle does it possess, that Icaza can say of it: 'For me... *El Licenciado Vidriera* is nothing but a pretext for Cervantes to publish his apophthegms'.⁵ *El Coloquio de los Perros*—according to Icaza, with *Don Quixote* the most original, interesting and perfect work of imagination of that time⁶—is richer and more varied in subject matter than any other of the Novelas, containing genre pictures of the life of butchers, shepherds, the con-

stabulary, sketches of the poet's and the actor's profession, reflections upon humility and evil speaking, together with a macabre episode in which the principal character is a witch. And this very wealth and variety of its subject matter separates it formally from the classical *Novelle* of Boccaccio. As in *El Licenciado Vidriera* the treatment of the story is ironical in the highest degree.

If a general characteristic of the *Novelas* of Cervantes be sought which distinguishes them from the formally more severe *novelle* of the Italian writers, it may be described as the unfettered play of the imagination and the universality of interest in all forms of life which Cervantes reveals in his choice of subject matter. These particular aspects of Cervantes' *Novelas* together with the ironic treatment of his themes might be expected to appeal to the Romantics, for whom the sole law to which the imagination was subject was the law of its own absolute liberty. Yet though the influence of *Don Quixote* was considerable upon the novel-writing of the Romantics, the *Novelas* do not appear to have affected the form of the *Novelle* to the same extent—though one or two exceptions must be made.

Tieck became acquainted with the works of Cervantes already in his school days; but though references, more specifically to *Don Quixote*, can be found in his early works generally, his early *Novellen* show no signs of the influence of the *Novelas Ejemplares*. After carefully sifting the evidence with regard to Kleist, Bertrand in his *Cervantes et le Romantisme Allemand* comes to the conclusion that what resemblances there are between the two writers are due not to an artificial imitation but to a profound kinship of temperament.⁷ It is true that a similar theme,

that of the woman who is ravished during a state of unconsciousness, is treated in *Die Marquise von O.* and in Cervantes' *La Fuerza del Sangre*, but the similarity exists only in the subject. Hoffmann's tale, *Das Gelübde*, has the same central incident. In Eichendorff's prose fiction the influence of Cervantes is apparent only in the novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart*,⁸ and possibly in the Novelle *Die Glücksritter*.

Hoffmann is the only one of the major Romantic writers who reveals quite openly the influence of the *Novelas Ejemplares*, in support of which statement it suffices to cite the Novelle in the *Phantasiestücke*, *Nachricht von den neuesten Schicksalen des Hundes Berganza*. In this work Hoffmann continues an account of the adventures which the dog Berganza had related to his companion in Cervantes' *Coloquio de los Perros*. In spite of the amplification of the witch episode in the Spanish original, the new adventures of Berganza differ in substance and significance from those related by Cervantes, and Hoffmann's tale resolves itself into a piece of ill-disguised autobiography. Nevertheless Hoffmann, like Cervantes, makes the dog pass through various phases of human life, which he judges and describes satirically; and in the course of his adventures the new Berganza, like the old, makes all sorts of moral observations, which he sets forth in long digressions.⁹

It is precisely this last element in Cervantes as in Hoffmann, which is taken up and elaborated excessively by Tieck in his later Novellen; and though there can be no doubt that the greater freedom in the use of the form, the unfettered play of fancy, the masterly use of irony, all of which are characteristics of Cervantes, contributed to

the development of the Romantic Novelle, it is the discursive, digressive element in Cervantes consisting in the description of certain states of society, in reflections upon abstract themes or special aspects of life and in moral observations and satirical comment, which determines very largely the form—or lack of form—of the later Novellen of Tieck.

In the 'twenties of the nineteenth century Tieck entered upon the second period of his literary career, a period lasting for some twenty years, during which time his principal poetical output was in the form of prose fiction, which he himself described as Novellen. He was for the first part of that time living in Dresden, the centre of a literary circle there, and a literary personage of considerable importance. He had definitely outgrown his Romantic predilections and found himself to a certain extent in conflict with a circle of literary people in Dresden—the so-called 'Pseudo-Romantiker', who represent a continuation of Romanticism in a debased form. Half-way between these epigones of an exhausted Romanticism and the younger writers of the Jung Deutschland movement, with their demand for a literature placed in the service of political and social tendencies, stands the Tieck of these years, belonging to neither school.

The Novellen which Tieck wrote at this period of his life are not easily accessible. The last complete edition of them was published in 1853, and of the thirty-nine which make up the twelve volumes, only three or four have since been reprinted among the selected works, from which it may be reasonably argued that they have no very great or living poetical interest. Further, in the history of the German Novelle they do not represent a fruitful

line of development. They stand alone—the greater number of them—the monument of a mistaken conception of what the genre can achieve, and for this reason they had no successors except in some minor works of the Jung Deutschland writers, which like the Novellen of Tieck himself have fallen into oblivion.

In the introduction to the eleventh volume of his collected works published in 1829 Tieck had given a definition of the *Novelle* stressing the necessity of a *Wendepunkt* in its construction; and in his further remarks on the same subject he assigns to the genre other characteristics, which are obviously put forward in support of his own methods at the time. Referring to the *Novelas* of Cervantes, to which his own later stories are definitely more akin than to the *novelle* of Boccaccio, he writes: 'But all ranks of society, all circumstances of modern times, their conditions and peculiarities are certainly to the clear-seeing poetical eye not less suited for poetry and a noble presentation than his own time and surroundings were to Cervantes'. Later in the same introduction: 'It will also occur that attitudes of mind, disposition and opinion develop themselves in the contrast, the conflict between the persons involved in the action, and thereby become converted into action themselves'. Later he speaks of the opportunity which the form of the *Novelle* offers for argument, judgment and variety of opinions.¹⁰ The gist of these demands on behalf of the *Novelle* is that it may deal with contemporary events and conditions, and that it is capable of treating controversial ideas and of presenting them in the form of discussion. Thus the stress is again shifted from the event as such, to the ideas, for the presentation of which the event itself and almost in-

evitably the characters are merely the occasion and have no real, living justification. Tieck introduces then what is known as the Reflexionsnovelle, which contains all the germs of Tendenzdichtung. In this type of Novelle the source of inspiration is not the event which is the basic core of the Novelle in its purest form, but the discussion of some abstract idea, or more frequently some topical question of the day, some literary or social tendency. The characters and incidents are then constructed to illustrate the ideas, usually to demonstrate the ill-effects of the tendency which is being attacked. Thus in the Novelle *Die Gemälde* (1821) he attacks the false cult of art; in *Die Vogelscheuche* (1835) the intrigues and ineptitudes and exaggerated self-importance of the Pseudo-Romantics; in *Der Mondsüchtige* (1831) he breaks a lance on behalf of the aged Goethe, who is the subject of attack by such writers as Pustkuchen and Menzel; in *Eigensinn und Laune* (1835) he gives a realistic picture of female degeneration, which is represented as the result of the emancipated ideas with regard to the status of women which the Jung Deutschland writers were making popular. As may be expected the characters are more or less schematic representatives of ideas: 'Programmfiguren', says one writer, of 'Deuschtümelei, religiöse Schwärmererei, Konvertitenwesen, Weltschmerz, Nazarenertum, Teegeselligkeit Berlins'.¹¹

As far as the external form is concerned it tends to be extremely diffuse—some of these so-called Novellen run to three and four hundred pages—and this is no doubt an inevitable result of the subject matter. In a great many of them the element of actual discussion and debate is so predominant that practically the whole Novelle is in the

form of conversational dialogue. The epic form is broken through, and instead of either narrative or description—which are the two legitimate functions of the epic writer—Tieck gives dialectics, a characteristic perhaps of dramatic literature but not of epic. So important a part indeed does the dialogue play in these Novellen that Kimmerich divides them into two groups: 'Erzählungen mit eingelegtem Dialog; und Dialoge mit eingelegten Erzählungen'.

These Novellen have lost their interest for later generations to such an extent that they have never been reprinted since the collected edition of 1858; they were, however, at the time the most popular form of prose literature, though some contemporary writers—for instance, Grillparzer and Hebbel—deplored them as being incompatible with the formal requirements of literature. The reasons for their contemporary popularity and their present neglect are the same. Tieck was at that time the literary authority of Germany, the greatest name after Goethe: he has ceased to be of any living importance to-day, and even his purely Romantic works are seen to be inferior to those of Novalis for instance. Moreover his subject matter concerned itself with contemporary problems, which stood in the centre of public interest in his day, but have now long been superseded and were of so specialized and time-conditioned a nature that the Novellen can no longer be understood without a knowledge of the cultural conditions of the age in which they were written. Further, the treatment of these problems in a rather *déagagé* conversational tone—without any attempt at stylization—has deprived them of that permanence which formal beauty and distinction can lend to subject matter which is in

itself second-rate. By an easy careless tone of narration and conversation Tieck gained immediate popularity at the cost of future and enduring respect. However, though the purely human content of these Novellen is too slight and the style too little *soigné* to have secured for them an enduring place in German literature, their importance from the point of view of the history of German culture must not be overlooked. They give us a valuable picture of the cultural conditions and interests of educated society in the larger towns.

The following brief survey of these Novellen arranged in groups is based upon the arrangement made by Jakob Minor.¹²

(1) *Zeitnovellen*—that is, pictures of contemporary life, generally ironical or satirical in tone—attacking morbid tendencies of Romanticism (excessive religiosity, the cult of the marvellous, a mystical attitude to art) which were prevalent at that time. These Novellen belong mainly to the period 1820–30 and include such stories as *Die Gemälde* (1821), *Musikalische Leiden und Freuden* (1823), *Der Geheimnisvolle* (1823).

(2) *Künstlernovellen*—composed between 1825 and 1835—written not merely to present the character of the artist, usually the poet, but also with a certain didactic tendency. The best known of these—one which is reprinted in most of the Selected Editions—is *Ein Dichterleben* (Part I, 1825; Part II, 1829), which deals with the figures of Shakespeare, Nash, Kyd, and describes the death of Marlowe. Some of the speeches placed in the mouth of Shakespeare are a repudiation of Romantic theories. Other Novellen of this kind are *Das Fest zu Kenilworth* (1824), and *Der Tod des Dichters* (1833)—the

last-named dealing with the death of the Portuguese poet, Camoëns.

(3) *Historische Novellen*. To this group belong some of the best achievements of Tieck's later years, namely, *Der Aufruhr in den Cevennen* (1826), an account of a religious rising in the early years of the seventeenth century, in which the underlying theme for discussion is religious bigotry, *Der wiederkehrende griechische Kaiser* (1830), *Hexensabbath* (1831).

(4) *Tendenznovellen*, attacking 'das junge Deutschland'—written during the 'thirties; including *Der Mond-süchtige* (1831), *Der Wassermensch* (1834) and *Eigensinn und Laune* (1835). Tieck's position is now reversed. Whereas in the 1820's he had been attacking Romanticism and so appeared as a potential ally to the Jung Deutschland movement, he is not prepared to go the whole way with them in the acceptance of their principles, whether social or literary. They, on the other hand, find a lack of seriousness in his easy talkative style, and require that literature shall be placed in the service of political agitation. In his rejection of this point of view and his attacks upon the Jung Deutschland tendencies in his later Novellen he is frequently driven back upon Romantic subject matter.

(5) *Spuk- und Zaubernovellen*. These include *Pietro von Albano* (1825), *Das Zauberschloss* (1829) and *Die Wundersüchtigen* (1831), in which, however, the apparently supernatural elements are rationally explained.

(6) *Spitzbubengeschichten*. Stories dealing with the adventures of thieves and rogues. Amongst these *Der Jahrmarkt* is clearly influenced by Cervantes' *Novela, Rinconete y Cortadillo*.

Two other Novellen, *Der junge Tischlermeister* (begun 1819 but not published until 1836) and *Des Lebens Überfluss* (1838), do not fall into any of the above groups. *Der junge Tischlermeister*, the longest of the Novellen, is largely concerned with the social conditions of the time, gives an elaborate description of the trade of a carpenter and discusses at length the question of guilds and corporations. *Des Lebens Überfluss*, the most readable of all these later Novellen, is an illustration of the idea that most of the things which are regarded as the necessities of life can under the force of circumstances be dispensed with as luxuries. Mention must also be made of *Die wilde Engländerin*—a Novelle within a Novelle, since it is related by one of the characters in *Das Zauberschloss*. In this succinctly presented psychological Novelle, Tieck exhibits an unusual skill in construction and gives a striking example of the Wendepunkt, which he had himself postulated as the essential element in the Novelle.

In a general estimate of Tieck's later Novellen it can be said that only those works have taken a permanent place in the development of the genre which are, on the whole, free from Tendenz: the Künstler and historical Novellen, and both types have their origin in the works of earlier writers (Kleist and Hoffmann). In the historical Novellen Tieck definitely contributed something to the development of a special form, which reaches its summit in the works of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. The Novellen, however, which are essentially presentations of prevailing social and literary conditions with satirical intention—the Tendenznovellen—have long since ceased to be of interest, as they are in essence alien to the form of the Novelle. It may indeed be maintained with some justi-

fication that Tieck's literary and poetical gifts were peculiarly unsuited to the *Novelle* as a genre. Tieck was a facile writer, and, as with most facile writers, he possessed a mind of no great profundity. What he has to say, he says with great ease, with a specious poeticalness and unfailing loquacity. Further, he was by nature as well as under the influence of Romantic theories regardless of the purity of form. All these things are characteristic of his early works—*Franz Sternbald's Wanderungen*, *Kaiser Oktavian*, *Genoveva*, *Prinz Zerbino*—works which are wearisome by reason of their length, the shallowness of their poetical quality, and the continual oscillation between epic, dramatic and lyric form¹³: they are the antithesis of those qualities which are demanded of the writer who practises the severe artistry of the *Novelle*. Again, though a certain amount of reflection may be conceded as a permissible element in the *Novelle*, it is only tolerable when it is the reflection of a mind of originality or profundity such as Cervantes. Tieck had considerable critical ability and his *aperçus* on art and poetry and the art of life are often marked by real acumen and artistic perception, but his reflections upon questions other than aesthetic ones are not the outcome of a deeply philosophic mind. The result is that the action of his *Novellen* is overlaid and suffocated with reflections of negligible importance. Nor is the action itself, when unearthed, of such interest as to hold the attention of the reader.

Tieck brought the *Novelle* back from the exoticism of the later Romantic writers into the circle of contemporary subject matter. He set it to deal with the world of actuality, with social, literary and political conditions but in a form which was unsuited to its specific nature, and his

treatment of the genre had no real or lasting influence upon its development, except in so far as it revealed to the Jung Deutschland writers the possibility of using the Novelle form for their own tendentious purposes.

In spite of certain misgivings on the part of Heinrich Laube as to the artistic propriety of the later Novellen of Tieck and the suitability of discussional elements for the form of the Novelle as such,¹⁴ the writers of the Jung Deutschland movement as a whole derived their theory of the Novelle from Tieck, regarding him as the originator of a new type: the Tendenznovelle. Laube still makes the distinction between the Novelle which is a short succinct narrative, and the Novelle with a definitely tendentious aim; the latter he regards as an extraordinarily important discovery of a modern form.¹⁵ But it is with Theodor Mundt that this new conception of the Novelle finds its most uncompromising expression; and the following passage from his *Moderne Lebenswirren* (1840) will indicate clearly enough the rôle which the Novelle is to play in modern literature: the Novelle being, according to Mundt, particularly adapted to carry political propaganda unobtrusively and convey it without arousing the notice of the censorship. He asks:

Which literary form is most in keeping with the trend of the times? It is the Novelle...the Germans must be caught by means of the Novelle. The Novelle makes its nest in rooms and amongst families, sits at table with the family and overhears the evening conversation, and then is the opportunity to insinuate something under the night cap of paterfamilias, or whisper to the son whilst he is comfortably smoking his pipe, a train of ideas which may possibly in time

affect the future of the whole nation. The Novelle is a magnificent harvest field for political allegory.

He then suggests that he will write historical, comic, i.e. satirical Novellen whose subject matter is taken from contemporary conditions. 'They shall fly out over the present age like bees, each one equipped with a sting.'¹⁶

This conception of the Novelle is repeated by Mundt in his *Geschichte der Literatur der Gegenwart* (1842): where the element of reflection directed upon some contemporary tendency is postulated as essential to the genre, *apropos* of which however he points out that this particular element is hostile to the plasticity of its form.¹⁷ Side by side with this entirely arbitrary and tendencious view of the genre as possessing an extra-aesthetic aim goes the doubt as to its artistic validity. Thus Gutzkow writes in 1834 that it is artistically not fully valid as a genre, and that it is only its connection with public affairs and its satirical possibilities which recommend it to a certain extent to ambitious young writers.¹⁸

Actually during the 1830's the Novelle—largely under the stimulus of Tieck's later works—was the favourite form of prose fiction. Periodicals and newspapers were full of so-called Novellen and countless collections of old and new ones appeared. That these works were almost entirely undeserving of the title Novelle, in so far as it designates a severely artistic form, goes without saying in view of the prevalent idea that the genre was a particularly suitable vehicle for conveying tendencious ideas. And in effect there are no works of first-rate artistic merit to be recorded. What is true of the Novelle is valid also for other literary genres. For the writers of Jung Deutschland literature was primarily a means of spread-

ing revolutionary ideas. Thus Gutzkow in an article 'der deutsche Roman' states frankly the function of literature as conceived by the generation of writers, who were in revolt against the conventions and restrictions of that period of political, social and religious reaction: 'die Literatur müsse der Revolution der Sitten immer vorausgehen'. The Novel is the dark lantern of the smuggling of ideas.¹⁹

The Jung Deutschland movement was characterized by the two qualities of revolutionary ferment and pessimistic misgiving. It was a period of transition similar to that of the Sturm und Drang. And just as the Sturm und Drang movement in revolt against the rationalism of the Aufklärung prepared the way for the more solid ideals of German idealism, the Jung Deutschland movement, shaking itself free from the idealism of Classicism and Romanticism alike, was the forerunner of the Poetic Realism of the middle of the century. But that very element of misgiving, together with all its revolutionary fervour, distinguishes it from the more virile revolutionary movement of the preceding century. Out of its feeling of impotence in the face of the political and social forces arrayed against it grows the Weltschmerz which characterizes so many of the writers of that period. It becomes conscious of itself as a generation torn between conflicting forces and tends to coquet with its own inadequacy and ironize its sufferings. It is the age which established the popularity of Byron in Germany. The catchword 'die Zerrissenen' is coined to describe those who are over-sensitive to the spiritual and intellectual problems of the time. Literature and journalism were the weapons which it found to hand to carry on its war against obscurantist

ideas in politics, religion and morality. But in view of the rigid nature of press and book censorship then exercised by the various governments in Germany and Austria, the war itself could be carried on only by subterfuge. Every writer of the Jung Deutschland movement suffered under the censorship ban.

The decree of the Bundestag in 1835, prohibiting the publication of books by all the writers designated under the title of Jung Deutschland, marks a definite period in the production of these literary revolutionaries. Though up to that date none of them had doubted that the only important element in literature was the transmission of tendentious ideas, regardless of literary form, after 1835 a greater importance is attached to the form itself, a change of attitude which is particularly noticeable in Laube. At the same time, even in the later period of their writings, formal excellence was rather a recognized desideratum than a real achievement. For the severe artistry of the *Novelle* none of them possessed the necessary poetic equipment, and their conception of the genre was from the beginning falsified by the belief that it was one which having no precise form could be utilized for every ulterior purpose.

The characteristic of the *Novellen* of the Jung Deutschland writers, more especially in the earlier period of their literary activity, is, together with the extra-aesthetic motive of 'idea smuggling', the tendency to present, instead of a clearly outlined incident, a picture of certain cultural conditions, of representative groups of individuals, of 'attitudes of mind, disposition and opinion', as Tieck writes, seen always from the point of view of the Jung Deutschland reformer. Thus Gustav Kühne in

his *Wartburgfeier* (1831) gives a description of the state of public feeling after the wars of Liberation; Theodor Mundt in his *Madelon oder die Romantiker in Paris* (1832) draws a picture of the young generation of French poets; E. A. Willkomm (the author of a novel *Die Europamüden* (1838)) writes a so-called Novelle in two volumes, *Julius Kühn* (1833) describing the life of a typical Jung Deutschland literary man; Ungern-Sternberg, a writer of no great intrinsic importance, presents in his Novelle *Die Zerrissenen* (1832) a picture of the generation of that period, which felt itself inwardly torn in the conflict of ideas. As late as 1853, even, Gutzkow describes in *Die Nihilisten* a type of intellectuals which the Jung Deutschland movement had brought to the fore, who brandished in the face of philistine opinion their freedom from the recognized conventions of society. It must be conceded, however, that by this time Gutzkow's attitude to the characters of his story is more critical than admiring. In his *Quarantäne im Irrenhause* (1835) Kühne makes use of the fiction of a young man being mistakenly detained in a lunatic asylum to give a picture of the world in which the so-called sane are represented as mad, the mad as sane. All these works as well as other Novellen by Kühne—*Die beiden Magdalene* (1833), *Klosternovellen* (1838)—and by Mundt are mainly concerned to ventilate problems of the age, consigning the actual 'novellistic' element of incident and character to a position of minor importance.

Amongst the writers of superior, though not of first-class merit, who were associated with the movement, Heinrich Laube and Karl Gutzkow contributed Novellen of more permanent value than those already mentioned, though it is to be remarked that their better achieve-

ments belong to a period in which the Jung Deutschland ferment had subsided. As has already been suggested the year 1835 marks the close of the more militant aspect of the Jung Deutschland literary activities. With Laube the change of attitude is almost immediately apparent in a more resigned state of mind as well as in the greater attention which he devotes to considerations of form. The period in which he was most productive as a writer of Novellen lies between 1832 and 1842; after this he turns to the drama and takes up the Novelle again only in the 'eighties. Gutzkow's Novellen, apart from his early works at the beginning of the 'thirties, culminating in *Der Sadduzäer von Amsterdam* (1834), belong mainly to the 'fifties, especially to the period in which he was editing the magazine *Unterhaltungen am Häuslichen Herd* (1852-61). Like Laube he was deflected for a time towards the drama, which became his principal form of literary expression during the 'forties.

Laube's *Reisenovellen* appeared in six volumes between 1834 and 1837. In their contents as in their title they betray the influence of Heine, and would have been more suitably entitled 'Reisebilder' or 'Reiseabenteuer', for they have little or no connection with the genre Novelle. The Reisebild was a bastard genre invented by Heine. Its ill-defined form was especially suited for the purposes for which Heine required it, namely as a receptacle for such disparate elements as political or literary satire, travel description, personal experiences largely of an erotic nature, and reflections and observations of a general kind. Laube's aim was to narrate stories which, in their subject matter, were specifically characteristic of the various districts through which he travelled and illus-

trated the manners and customs, the landscape, the type of inhabitants of each individual place. In effect the *Reisenovellen* consist to a very large extent of travel description, accounts of other travellers, and of Laube's own real or imagined amorous adventures. Though the author himself, in editing these early works for inclusion in a complete edition, attempts to stress the *Novelle* element in them in order to underline his independence of Heine's *Reisebilder*, any strict chronicler of the genre must reject them as lying outside the province of the *Novelle* both in subject matter and literary form. Only occasionally does Laube separate from the mass of description and personal adventure a self-contained narrative which even superficially bears some resemblance to the form of the *Novelle*, and these narratives—*Die Novelle*, *Eine Tiroler Geschichte*, *Gebirgsnovelle*, *Die Maske*, *Die Novelle in der Theaterloge*, for instance—are either merely sketches, embryonic *Novellen* one might call them, or are lacking in that artistry which is an essential of the genre.

Laube's superficiality, his facility in writing and his fundamental vulgarity are most evident in these *Reisenovellen*. His positive assets as a writer are vitality, liveliness of mind, wit, though certainly inferior to that of his model Heine, and a certain highly coloured quality. As has already been suggested he begins about 1835 to develop a feeling for the importance of form, and the dedication of his *Novelle Die Schauspielerin* (1836) (to Varnhagen von Ense) may be regarded as a confession of former guilt in regard to this question and a promise of betterment in future, as also a rejection of the idea that literature is merely a vehicle for the conveying of ten-

dencious ideas. With special reference to the genre *Novelle* he singles out two qualities which have had a deleterious influence upon contemporary production in the genre: the lack of taste and the violence which has been done to the form by making it the vessel for polemical discussion.²⁰ Nevertheless, in spite of the praiseworthy intentions with regard to form and the determination to avoid polemical treatment of his subject matter, it cannot be said that the later *Novellen* of Laube attain to any real distinction. Neither *Liebesbriefe* (1835) nor *Die Schauspielerin* (1836) nor *Das Glück* (1836) rises above the commonplace in subject matter or treatment. None of them reveals that 'sharply marked silhouette' which Heyse requires of the genre. The incidents which form the core of the narrative are without originality, the characters are uninteresting, the style flat, and the continual intrusion of trite reflection is tiresome and unedifying. In all these stories love plays an important part, and the subject is never approached by Laube without a certain tone of vulgar amorousness, and it is perhaps not too much to say that he always betrays himself as fundamentally the philanderer. The best of Laube's stories is *Die Bandomire* (1842), in which, forsaking contemporary life and problems, he gives an historical picture of Courland at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But though the story has a vigour and precision of character-drawing lacking in the others, it exceeds the limits of the *Novelle* in the diffuseness with which it spreads itself over historical events generally. Laube himself called it 'eine Erzählung'.

Of a more serious temperament than his friend Laube, Karl Gutzkow is equally prolific though less facile as a

writer. For him, as for all the writers of Jung Deutschland, literature was in the first place the vehicle for the propagation of ideas of social and political reform, and even when his early reforming zeal had cooled, he continued to occupy himself mainly with the discussion of contemporary social problems in his novels and dramas. Much of his narrative work is of a purely ephemeral nature and his short stories, contributed largely to newspapers and journals, are in the nature of sketches. Rarely does he attain the distinction of form which justifies the description of his stories as Novellen. Among his early writings the only one which calls for comment is *Der Sadduzäer von Amsterdam* (1834), in which his personal experiences are presented in the fate of the apostate Jew Uriel Acosta (afterwards dramatized in the blank verse tragedy bearing the name of its hero). The sufferings which his own abjuration of orthodox religion had brought upon himself, the hostility thereby incurred and the loss of his fiancée, give to the Novelle a greater intensity of emotional content than his other works possess. But the Novelle is fundamentally a Tendenz work, attacking intolerance in religious matters.

After 1835 he was mainly concerned with novels and dramas, but in 1849 a volume of 'Neue Novellen' appeared and from that time onward, more especially during the years 1852 to 1861 during which he was editing his journal *Unterhaltungen am Häuslichen Herd*, in imitation of Dickens' *Household Words*, the short story became his principal and most successful form of literary expression, the more so as his popularity as a writer of dramas was steadily declining. Of the Novellen contributed to his journal *Die Nihilisten* (1853) has already been mentioned

as an instance of the inclination in writers of his school to present groups of characters, typical of prevailing intellectual tendencies, rather than the fate of individuals. *Die Nihilisten* is rather a short novel than a Novelle in the strict sense of the term. In *Der Emporblick* (1852), originally entitled *Ein Mädchen aus dem Volke, Novelle aus dem Volksleben der Grossstadt*, he breaks new ground in drawing his chief character from the city proletariat. The potentialities of the *Dorfgeschichte* had by this time been fairly well exploited and the genre as such was well established and had, in spite of much adverse criticism, become widely popular.²¹ It would seem that its popularity suggested to Gutzkow the possibility of using the life of the poorer classes in the cities as a new source of subject matter in the same way as Auerbach and others had drawn upon the life of the village. One of the characters in the Novelle, relating the earlier adventures of some of the persons concerned, asks for indulgence for what he calls 'eine städtische *Dorfgeschichte*', and continues: 'Glücklicherweise haben wir es in unserm Geschmack dahin gebracht, uns für die kleinen Abenteuer von Bauern, Milchmägden, Viehhirten, Rekruten ebenso zu interessieren, wie man sich sonst für Undine und Kühleborn, Schlemihl und seinen Schatten, Goethes Eugenien und Theresen, Natalien und Ottilien interessierte'.²² He proposes calling his story *Die Weihe der Arbeit*, a title which, as the incidents reveal, is ironical in intention.

Amongst the numerous short stories written at this time and later (*Die Diakonissin* (1855), originally written as a drama; *Aus dem Schwabenland* (1856), a village story; *Der Werwolf* (1871), an historical tale) one calls for special mention, as approaching more nearly than any

other work of this kind to the stricter form of the Novelle. This is *Die Kurstauen* (1852), a psychological study of considerable subtlety, in which the peripeteia is the result of a deliberate psychological experiment made by one of the characters upon another. The climax of the story, which approaches very near to bathos, is akin to that of Boccaccio's story of the Falcon. In both Novellen the turning-point is a meal of roast birds, which were not originally intended for human consumption; but whereas in Boccaccio's story the falcon is eaten, in Gutzkow's the carrier pigeons do not appear upon the table. A comparison between the two stories cannot fail to reveal the superiority of the society of fourteenth-century Italy to that of nineteenth-century Germany as Gutzkow knew it.

Neither Gutzkow nor Laube was suited by temperament to be a writer of Novellen. The tendentious element in literature which was for them, at least in their early years, an article of faith prevented them from the start from appreciating justly the formal requirements of any poetical genre, of the Novelle in particular. Where Laube was inclined to be trivial and vulgar, Gutzkow tended to be ponderous, slipshod in his style and lacking in any sort of distinction. Their subject matter had in some instances the specious and ephemeral interest which attaches to the latest topical problem; when that interest was lacking there was no profoundly human one to take its place.

One other writer must be mentioned here, Georg Büchner, in virtue of an unfinished Novelle, *Lenz* (1835?). Büchner, though not a member of the Jung Deutschland group, was acquainted with Gutzkow and was a revolutionary of a more uncompromising type than his literary contemporaries. In his dramas, notably *Woyzek*, he an-

anticipates the ideas and methods of literary movements which came into existence sixty years later. *Lenz* is a psychopathological study of the Sturm und Drang poet, at a time when he was already on the verge of insanity. The *Novelle* is practically without incident, consisting entirely of a subtle and delicate analysis of *Lenz's* state of mind, anticipating in its form the psychological *Novelle* of the end of the century, and in its prose style expressionistic methods.

The Jung Deutschland writers following the lead given by Tieck had brought the *Novelle* back from the exoticism of the Romantics into touch with reality, to the treatment of subject matter taken from the everyday contemporary world, but by their stressing of 'Zeitprobleme' had set it a task with which it was unable to cope. The *Novellen* of the middle of the nineteenth century are almost without exception realistic, but with a realism which in its finest expression does not exclude Romantic elements. This realism in the *Novelle*, however, does not derive so much from Tieck and the Jung Deutschland writers, as from the *Dorfgeschichte*. It is the amalgamation of *Dorfgeschichte* with the Romantic deepening of emotional content which produces some of the finest specimens of the *Novelle* in German literature.

Chapter VI

INTERLUDE—THE VILLAGE OR PEASANT STORY

The Village Story ('Dorfgeschichte') is not necessarily a type of *Novelle*. One of the essentials of the *Novelle* as a genre is a conscious artistry, which is more apparent in it than in any other prose form. The concentration upon the one event demands a carefully thought-out conformity of means to end. The Village Story as it first appears is careless of form, and only in the hands of a master does it attain to the dignity of literature.

Though the life of the village and of peasants forms the subject matter of certain works of literature in mediaeval Germany, it is not actually until the eighteenth century that it is treated sympathetically and presented as something having intrinsic interest and not merely as matter for satire. Its origins as a definite genre can perhaps be found in the idylls of Voss and Maler Müller. Both of these writers were aiming at a representation of country life which should be true to nature in conscious opposition to the graceful and unreal idylls of Solomon Gessner. Maler Müller, especially in the two idylls in dialogue form, *Die Schafschur* (1775) and *Das Nusskernen* (written earlier but not published until 1811), gives pictures of village life which can hardly, it is true, be called *Novellen*, but nevertheless contain the germ of the Village Story in the anecdote which is related and debated by the peasants at their work of sheep-shearing or nut-shelling. In its simplest form the Village Story is the *Kalendergeschichte*

—that is to say, popular stories in the nature of an anecdote, generally of a moralizing character, which found a place in the calendars issued for the use of the peasants. These 'literary' contributions to the annual calendars formed practically the only secular reading matter of the peasants. The subject matter, since the stories were intended for the consumption of peasants, was devoted to the description and narration of events drawn from the same social milieu as that to which the readers belonged; and this idea that the story is intended not for an educated but for an uneducated public is not entirely dropped even when the Village Story becomes a recognized literary type—about the middle of the nineteenth century—with the result that it tends to retain a moralizing, paedagogic tone.

A distinction must be made between two forms, however, which are different both in origin and intention, and are artistically amalgamated perhaps in the work of one man only: Jeremias Gotthelf. On the one hand there is the unliterary form, of which the *Kalendergeschichte* is the type, stories written for the consumption of the villagers, generally with the intention of instilling some moral precept. (A parallel in the present age would be the stories that appear in a parish magazine.) The other form, the literary form, comes into existence when poets or literary men discover village life as a subject matter which can be exploited in such a way as to rouse the interest of an educated reading public. Here of course it is mainly this latter form which comes up for consideration; the earlier form only in so far as it becomes absorbed in the other, or contributes some characteristic element to the genre as such.

Michael Kohlhaas may perhaps be described as an 'unintentional' Village Story. The source of inspiration for Kleist was a chronicle of the eighteenth century in which he found a character of daemonic force of will and obstinate adherence to an idea. That this man was a peasant was not a matter of prime importance. What interested Kleist in him was not, it is safe to assume, his social standing—whether peasant, Bürger or noble was immaterial—but his qualities as a personality, pure and simple. Nevertheless the incidents of the story, the injustice to which Kohlhaas is subjected, depend precisely upon his social standing as a peasant whose rights can be flouted and disregarded by a simple Landjunker who finds protection at court. In so far, therefore, as the events which befall Kohlhaas are conditioned by the fact that he is a peasant, and as such is subject to a set of circumstances which are characteristic for the peasant life of his day, Kleist's Novelle may be called a Village or Peasant Story—an 'unintentional' one, because Kleist was not really concerned to give a picture of the injustice to which a certain class of society was subjected, but to illustrate in the personality of an individual certain ethical and metaphysical ideas. A more genuine example of the Village Story is furnished by the writer Heinrich Zschokke, whose Novelle *Das Goldmachedorf* (1817) became very popular in its time and is still so far read that it is frequently reprinted in cheap editions. *Das Goldmachedorf* has no very great claims to be regarded as a work of art. It is essentially a tract, and its aim, beneath the novellistic form, is to raise the educational and ethical level of life in the village. It describes the influence of a young idealistic schoolmaster upon the de-

based life of the village to whose school he is appointed, and belongs rather to the first 'unliterary' form of the *Dorfgeschichte*. Like *Michael Kohlhaas*, it represents only certain aspects of the Village Story, and cannot claim to be a fully accredited example of the new literary genre. Nor can Brentano's story, *Vom braven Kasperl und vom schönen Annerl*, which appeared in the same year 1817. Though a story of peasant life, its inspiration is a Volkslied, and it is in essence a Stimmungsnovelle, belonging definitely to the world of Romanticism, in spite of the fact that its characters are drawn from everyday life, and a certain attempt at realism in the presentation is apparent. With regard to it as with regard to *Michael Kohlhaas* it may be said that the village element in it is fortuitous; perhaps in view of the Romantic predilections for folk literature, the peasants whose fate it records should be regarded as representatives of the Romantic 'idea' of the folk rather than of actual peasant life.

The real founders of the *Dorfgeschichte* in German literature are Jeremias Gotthelf and Berthold Auerbach; Gotthelf's first works appearing in 1836, Auerbach's in 1842. A distinction must, however, be made between the two writers in regard to their intentions. Gotthelf is substantially and primarily the writer of the unliterary *Dorfgeschichte*: his aim is fundamentally a paedagogic one, and it is doubtful whether he approached his story-writing activities at all in the spirit of the artist or conscious literary man. As he himself says: 'I do not possess in any way the technical ability which recognizes artistic excrescences and gives a polish to the whole.... My gifts are purely gifts of nature and even if I achieve an artistic success it is by instinct'.¹ He writes to the peasants—he

was a protestant pastor in a small town in the Bernese Oberland—and because he wishes to affect their lives ethically he writes about peasants. The sincerity and simplicity of his belief, and a certain epic endowment, which as he says is instinct rather than art with him, bring it about that, in spite of the extra-aesthetic intention on his part, to educate, improve, set right, admonish, his stories in nearly every instance rise above the merely didactic into the realm of pure literature. Auerbach, on the other hand, comes to the *Dorfgeschichte* from the side of literary intention. He is not so much the discoverer of the new genre as the conscious literary-poetical organiser of it as a definite literary form.

The question now arises, why did the Village Story suddenly become a recognized form of literature towards the middle of the nineteenth century? Not only Gotthelf and Auerbach cultivate it; nearly every writer of eminence in the middle of the century makes use of the subject matter of village life: Otto Ludwig, Droste-Hülshoff, Stifter, Keller, even Heyse, and it goes on through the century with Melchior Meyr, Anzengruber, Rosegger, who drew almost exclusively from the life of the peasants.

Here, as with so many tendencies in the later nineteenth century, it is necessary to go back to the Romantics. As was suggested in connection with Brentano's *Novelle*, however, it is not so much the peasant, clearly conceived as a social type, but the idea of the folk which first finds its expression in literature with them. From their discovery of folk literature, folk song, folk book, folk tale (i.e. fairy tale) they proceeded to the conception of a folk-soul. When Brentano applies these ideas in an actual work of literature, the result is a story whose characters

are representatives of the 'idea' folk, and in actual practice are peasants. The Romantics therefore make the Village Story possible with their discovery of the folk, though with them this is rather an idea, than a solid realization of the form which that idea assumes in the world of reality.

The Jung Deutschland writers proposed to break with all traditional subjects and theories. On the look-out for new subject matter they found nothing more solid than the topical problems and questions of the time upon which to build, the very shifting and changing nature of which was a poor example of that reality which they demanded as a substitute for the unreal fancies of the later Romantics. The whole tendency of the time not only in literature, but in philosophy as well, was in the direction of a realistic view of the universe. Meanwhile economic changes, the establishment of railways, the growth of industry, were threatening the existence of the village life. For the town dwellers, tossed hither and thither by the conflicting ideas of the time, the life of the village seemed to represent some solid enduring element, something that had existed unchanged for centuries, and had been fundamentally undisturbed by the upheavals of the Napoleonic wars. It was a world that was perhaps on the point of disappearing before the advent of new social forces. Literature discovered it as a field that could be cultivated.

Since the main stream of development of the *Novelle* is considerably enriched and strengthened by the advent of this new source of subject matter, a brief description of the development of the Village Story as such, confined to those writers who made it their special province, must find its place here. It has already been stated that it

comes into existence as a recognizable genre with Jeremias Gotthelf, the Swiss pastor, whose real name was Albert Bitzius. It has its origin in paedagogic intention—the *nom de plume* of Bitzius suggests the two aspects of his message: he is a lamenter of the evils of his time, and he directs the hearts of men to God, who alone can help them in their troubles. Like most of the writers of the middle of the century Gotthelf was affected by the rationalistic and materialistic ideas which, originally enunciated by philosophers such as Feuerbach and scientists such as Moleschott and Büchner, were rapidly becoming popularized and affecting the whole body of public opinion. To such ideas Gotthelf, as Bauernprediger, naturally took up a different attitude from that which Gottfried Keller later assumes. It is Gotthelf's task to counteract the disintegrating effect of these modern liberal views upon the peasantry by means of an appeal to traditional piety and religious observance. Ermatinger says of him that 'the conflict between his emotional christianity and the disintegrating rationalism of the liberal forces of the period was the intense inner experience and the most prolific source of ideas'.² Gotthelf points out in his stories again and again the disastrous effects of straying from the strict principles of religious belief, and the security and beauty of a life which is rooted in the simple and fundamental faith, which generations of peasants have held. His best-known works are the novels, *Uli der Knecht* and *Uli der Paechter*—but he wrote a large number of novels in addition to these; and a number of short stories which may be included in this survey of Novellen.

The subject matter is almost without exception the contemporary or almost contemporary life of the peasantry

of the Bernese Oberland. There is no attempt on the part of Gotthelf to idealize or to sentimentalize; on the other hand, his realism stops short of the naturalism of a Hauptmann or a Zola. His peasants are presented as decent human beings, but matter-of-fact, hard-headed, unaffected by fancies, unsentimental in their affections. The incidents which form the subject matter of his stories are of the most simple and everyday kind; the life and death of a broom binder, in which the most important event is the purchase of a wheelbarrow; the search for a wife on the part of a young peasant who wants above all to make sure that his bride is a good worker; the means by which a young wife is cured of her family pride and learns to respect her husband. These stories are a chronicle of peasant life, in which very rarely anything sensational happens. Gotthelf does not have recourse to the criminal event, which the town writer of Village Stories has to introduce in order to find anything worth recording in the lives of the peasants. It is precisely in the uneventfulness of their lives, and in the faithful portrayal of that, that Gotthelf's merit lies. But whether those stories really deserve to be called Novellen is another matter. The sum total of Gotthelf's works gives a picture of Bernese peasant life—a world in itself—which is Homeric in its objectivity, solidity and plasticity. Hardly any one of the individual stories contains the element of the unexpected, 'das Unerhörte', which is postulated as an essential of the Novelle. Hardly any, but there are two which certainly have the striking quality about them, 'der Falke' according to Heyse's theory, which distinguishes them from all the others: *Elsi die seltsame Magd*, the story of the strange, reticent, maidservant, who set

herself to serve as a penance for the pride of her family, and is unable to confess her love until her lover is threatened with death. This story, in the delineation of the obstinate reserve which is a characteristic of the peasant, and in its tragic *dénouement*, is certainly one of the best Novellen written during the nineteenth century. The other one, *Die schwarze Spinne*, is a story of mediaeval superstition and devil-dealing which can bear comparison with the most hair-raising tales of horror. Both these stories, however, stand out from among the others by reason of an intensity of action, and a more striking type of incident than Gotthelf usually employs.

Berthold Auerbach, of Jewish blood, made his first appearance as a writer of Village Stories with the story *Der Tolpatsch* in 1842. In the following year the first and second volumes of his *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* appeared and became immediately very popular. Though he turned away from the Village Story afterwards in favour of problem novels, he returned to his first success in 1876 with the publication of four new Village Stories under the title *Nach dreissig Jahren*. The *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* rather than the stories of Jeremias Gotthelf established the Novelle of peasant life as a definite literary genre in German literature. It was Auerbach's intention, as it was that of Gotthelf, that his stories should be read by the lower and uneducated classes of society, and certainly the paedagogic element in the stories of Auerbach is present and also intentional, even if less obvious than in Gotthelf. But Auerbach possessed what Gotthelf did not, at any rate consciously, possess: a sense of form. His stories have a greater artistic quality than those of Gotthelf, even though they do not attain

except in very rare instances to first-rate excellence. On the other hand, his subject matter has not the same simplicity as that of the Swiss writer. It is perhaps the inevitable consequence of the conscious artist that instead of merely recording he should exploit. As a result he is not content with the sheer monotony and everydayness of the peasant's life, but tends to heighten and intensify incidents, situations, psychology. He gives us the life of the village seen, not as with Gotthelf, from the level of the village, but from the point of view of the literary man, to whom the incidents and characters are copy, but copy which, as a literary man, he feels must be touched up a little in order to make it really interesting. So he strengthens the sentiment in one place, heightens the dramatic tension in another, underlines oddities of psychology in a third. It was the aim of Auerbach to give a complete picture of village life, writing a story to illustrate every aspect of it—(very much one may say what Chopin did in writing studies for the piano in every key).

The subject matter of the Village Story can be grouped round three or four main themes of interest: the farmhouse ('der Hof'), and all the problems connected with it; the whole village community; the contrast between village and town life; some exceptional passion or vice in an individual peasant. Auerbach's stories illustrate all these possibilities, but he is perhaps most successful in the stories in which he draws highly individualized psychological types—especially degenerate or criminally inclined characters: this very fact proving that he is in essence a literary man rather than recorder of peasant life.

It is often objected to his peasants that they are drawing-room peasants, projections of a literary mind, having

ideas which are foreign to their station; and certainly compared with those of Gotthelf they appear to be much more sophisticated. 'His peasants are turned out so smartly, and are so polished, they have the ideas of an Uhland and an Auerbach and are quite adapted for the world of refinement, but—they are no longer Swabian—they are Swabians transfigured.'³ This is a characteristic attitude to Auerbach's peasants. He himself said, in defence of his method of presenting his characters: 'I know perfectly well that the peasant has muck sticking to his clothes and boots, but that I don't reproduce'. And perhaps the effect they make upon the reader may be described thus: one may believe that his peasants have been at work in the cowshed, the pig-sty and the farm-yard, but somehow they never smell of those places—they have been deodorized before they are presented to the reader. But the theories of consequent naturalism had not yet been evolved; and even the presentation of the life of the village in as accurate a form as Gotthelf and Auerbach give was a considerable advance towards realism.

Auerbach's best-known stories are *Barfüssele*, *Die Frau Professorin* and *Diethelm von Buchenberg*, though they are not necessarily his best stories. *Barfüssele* is the story of a village Cinderella, rather sentimental but not without its charm; *Die Frau Professorin* deals with the contrast between village and town: a village maiden marries a young student who afterwards becomes a professor, and the difference between their ideas leads ultimately to tragedy. This story was dramatized by Charlotte Birch Pfeiffer under the title *Dorf und Stadt*, and for fifty years at least was one of the most popular plays in Germany. The third

of the stories mentioned, *Diethelm von Buchenberg*, is Auerbach's finest achievement and perhaps the only one of his stories which deserves a place among the masterpieces of Novellen literature of the nineteenth century: the tragic story of a peasant whom threatening financial disaster drives to crime.

The importance of the Village Story as a genre, appearing and establishing itself in German literature at this point, is that it brings a whole new type of subject matter in place of the fancies of the later Romantics and the topical problems of the Jung Deutschland writers. It opens up the whole world of the Bauerntum, a self-contained world characterized by its own laws, customs and traditions reaching back into the Middle Ages and having still abated nothing of their rigidity at the time in which it becomes the object of literary exploitation. There is no equivalent to the Bauerntum of Germany in England of the nineteenth century. As far as the development of the Novelle is concerned, it will be seen in the succeeding chapter that most of the greatest writers in this genre from the middle of the century onwards have drawn near to the subject matter of the Village Story in many of their works, and it would seem that the Novelle, like Antaeus, drew fresh strength from this contact with the soil.

It is not part of the scheme of this book to give an account of the development of the Village Story as a genre, only such examples of it—Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*, for instance—come up for consideration which can legitimately be described as Novellen. But a brief survey of the more outstanding works of this kind to the end of the century may follow here for the sake of completeness.

Two main types of writers of Village Stories may be distinguished: the writer who is country born and bred, and though himself not a peasant in the strictest sense of the term, is in such close contact with the life of the peasant that the circumstances of his subject matter are part of his immediate experience; and secondly the town bred writer, the literary man by profession, who discovers the peasant world as a source of subject matter, which can be drawn upon with fruitful results. To the former type belong Melchior Meyr and Peter Rosegger, to the latter Friedrich Spielhagen and Hans Hopfen.

Melchior Meyr's *Erzählungen aus dem Ries* began to appear in 1856 and were continued in 1860 and 1870. His stories centre round his native village of Nordstetten in Swabia, and were written as he himself says 'to pay his debt of poetical gratitude to his homeland in the description of its village life'. The underlying theme of all of them is the conflict between the rigid class conventions of the peasant world and the natural instincts and emotions of the individual characters, the conflict being invariably presented in the form of a love story in which the union of the lovers is hindered and delayed by the fact that one of them is poorer and occupies a less-honoured position in the village than the other: thus *Ludwig und Annemarie*. Like Auerbach, Meyr tends to sentimentalize his peasants and to subdue the harsher and crasser features of peasant life, and with him, as with Auerbach, the element of moral reflection unduly obtrudes. But he possesses a welcome sense of humour and power of characterization, and makes skilful use of dialect to heighten the realistic effect of his stories. A certain easy-going spaciousness of narration deprives his stories

of that formal excellence which would entitle them to be regarded as Novellen.

What Auerbach did for the Black Forest and Melchior Meyr for his district of Swabia, Peter Rosegger, the son of peasants, a shepherd boy, afterwards a journeyman tailor, and an entirely self-educated man, did for Styria. His numerous works of fiction, novels as well as short stories, made him the interpreter of the landscape and peasantry of his native mountains to the whole of Germany, and acquired for him a popularity which passed over from being a literary one to become a more personal one. His best collections of stories are *Sittenbilder aus dem steirischen Oberland* (1870), *Geschichten aus Steiermark* (1871) and, most popular of all, *Schriften des Waldschulmeisters* (1875). In spite of his realistic descriptions of the life of the peasants, he holds to an idealistic view of the beauty of a life more in accordance with nature amongst the mountain farms than is the life of the cities, and attacks the growth of industrialism which was threatening the purity of country manners. Like so many writers of Village Stories Rosegger retains the moralizing, paedagogic tendency which is with him, as with Jeremias Gotthelf, the outcome of a definitely religious attitude of mind.

Akin to Rosegger both in his underlying religious convictions and in his hostility to the invasion of modern industrialism in the simpler world of agricultural life is the Catholic priest Heinrich Hansjakob, whose special province is the district of Baden on the shores of the Lake of Constance. His stories—*Schneeballen* (1892), three volumes; *Der Vogt auf Mühlstein* (1895)—attract by their simplicity of feeling and style, a succinct power of

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characterization, and an individual sense of humour of a somewhat dour type, seasoned by the usual element of moralizing reflection.

North Germany as well as South Germany has its writers of Village Stories. The life of the Hanoverian peasant is the subject matter of Heinrich Sohnrey's stories. Sohnrey was for a long time the editor of the *Deutsche Dorfzeitung* and devoted his life to the amelioration of the peasant's lot. In his collections of stories, of which *Die Leute aus der Lindenhütte* (1886) is the most celebrated, he reveals himself as a writer with natural gifts of story-telling, but without the conscious artistry of the writer of Novellen. Finally, among the more naïve writers of Village Stories, Timm Kröger may be mentioned, like Theodor Storm a native of Schleswig-Holstein. From Storm he inherited something of the lyrical quality with which the older writer was able to invest his pictures of moor and heath. But he possessed also a gift of realistic vision, and a firmness of outline in the delineation of the peasants of northern Germany. And his attitude to life is more optimistic than that of Storm. His best known collections of stories are *Eine stille Welt, Bilder und Geschichten aus Moor und Heide* (1891), *Leute eigener Art, Novellen eines Optimisten* (1904), *Um den Wegzoll* (1905).

Amongst the second group of writers of Village Stories, the town-bred writers, who discover village life as a literary subject matter, Friedrich Spielhagen, whose main province is the problem novel dealing with contemporary social and political questions, deserves a place by reason of his Novelle, *Die Dorfkokette* (1868). The story, which does not show that immediate knowledge of some special

district which is characteristic of the writers of the first class, is nevertheless an effective piece of narrative, revealing the art of the skilled literary man. Town bred like Spielhagen was also Hans Hopfen, originally a member with Paul Heyse and Emanuel Geibel of the Munich school of poets. Hopfen is a story-teller possessing freshness and humour, and his Bavarian peasants are drawn with truth and convincingness. His writings comprise the *Bayrische Dorfgeschichten* (1878), *Kleine Leute* (1880), and a much later work *Der Böswirt* (1908), a forerunner of the Bavarian stories of Ludwig Thoma. Of greater eminence than Hans Hopfen, both as a creative writer and as a literary artist, is the Viennese poet and dramatist Ludwig Anzengruber. Though he began his career as a writer of sketches and stories his main claim to fame lies in his peasant dramas, almost equal to which in excellence are the two peasant novels *Der Schandfleck* (1877) and *Der Sternsteinhof* (1884). His Village Stories are contained in the collection *Dorfgänge* (1879). Anzengruber's attitude to the life of the peasants as subject matter is akin to that of Auerbach, for whom he expressed a great admiration; and like Auerbach he combines with a real gift of observation and understanding of peasant life a conscious intention to enlighten and reform, especially in the desire to substitute for the rigidity of peasant prejudices a wider, more tolerant morality based upon more humane ideals.

It will be seen from this brief summary of the outstanding writers of Village Stories during the second half of the century that the moralizing, paedagogic tendency of the *Kalendergeschichte*, from which the Village Story as a literary genre develops, remains one of its

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characteristics, even when the subject matter passes into the hands of professional literary men. In the history of the development of the *Novelle* the literary discovery of the village and peasant life plays an important part in enlarging and modifying the subject matter with which the *Novelle* is able to deal; and the fact that the *Novellen* writers of the middle of the century tended to shift the social scale down from that of the upper *Bürgertum* (the prevailing social class in the earlier examples of the *Novelle*) to that of the lower middle class and peasantry is no doubt not without its significance in the sociological history of Germany during the nineteenth century.

The opening years of the present century saw in Germany a revival of interest in works of fiction, dealing especially with the lives of those whose work brought them into close contact with the soil. Like most of the writers of *Village Stories* in the nineteenth century the authors of these novels cultivated intensively one particular district which they subjected to very detailed description. This so-called *Heimatkunst* came into fashion with the publication of Gustav Frenssen's *Jörn Uhl* in 1901, though Sudermann's novel *Frau Sorge* (1887) may be regarded as a forerunner of the type. Most of the works of this school are in the form of novels rather than of short stories and do not call for mention here, though Sudermann's *Litauische Geschichten* (1917) deserve to be noticed. They are again examples of the *Village Story* written by the urban literary man, but they possess a greater claim to be considered works of literary art than most *Village Stories* and perhaps than any other of the same author's narrative works. *Die Reise nach Tilsit* is a very moving story of a faithless husband who is restrained

from murder by the tenderness and uncomplaining patience of his wife, and the tragic irony of the conclusion heightens the artistic effect of the work.

Whilst the earlier writers of this school were clearly under the influence of the naturalistic theories of the last decade of the nineteenth century, later writers have adopted a more romantic view of the relations between the peasant and the land he tills; and such writers as Hermann Stehr, *Der Heiligenhof* (1917), and Ernst Wiechert, *Die Magd des Jürgen Dorskocil* (1932), have introduced a semi-mystical element, making their characters spiritually aware of their oneness with the forces of the earth in a way which transcends the straightforward realism of the nineteenth-century writers of the soil.

Chapter VII

THE NOVELLE OF POETIC REALISM

The fifth decade of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of the great period of the German Novelle: the period in which it attains to its distinctive form as a specifically German literary genre and finds expression in a number of works which are masterpieces of their kind and, considered as a genre, represent the highest achievements of German literature during a period which may be said to last until 1890. The other literary genres during these fifty years offer on the whole only isolated examples of greater works, and do not consistently maintain a high level. The great period of German drama was over, and no outstanding dramatic poet or group of poets dominates the middle years of the century with the one, certainly important, exception: Friedrich Hebbel. The only really great novel is *Der grüne Heinrich* of Gottfried Keller. The impulse given to lyrical poetry by the personality of Goethe had nearly exhausted itself: the Romantic lyric comes to an end and achieves its own ironical dissolution in the poetry of Heinrich Heine. The fifty years beginning round about 1840 are in German literature the period of the Novelle.

The period coincides also with the emergence and development of a new type of literature. Sturm und Drang, Classicism, Romanticism, Jung Deutschland are followed in the fullness of time by the 'Poetische Realismus'—a title invented by Otto Ludwig, who is one of the most characteristic exponents of this new movement. Poetic

Realism is the prevailing literary movement for the whole of the middle of the nineteenth century, having as a rival during the next fifty years only the bloodless imitation of German classicism represented at its best by the Munich school of poets. Both the writers of Poetic Realism and the epigones of German classicism with their cult of pure form are superseded by the Naturalists of the 1890's, whose ideal of literature was the exact antithesis of that of the Munich poets and the logical development of certain aspects of Poetic Realism.

The essence of Poetic Realism consists in its complete description of reality, the attribute 'poetic' signifying that it is not concerned with a pessimistic dissection of life, but rather that it accords to it positive value. When translated into the world of literature, life appears as 'poetical', that is to say, as something which has intrinsic worth, and their conviction of this intrinsic worth is the basic characteristic which unites all the realistic writers of this period. This conviction distinguishes them from the earlier and later naturalistic writers, and more especially from those who belong to the immediately succeeding generation at the end of the century. The characteristic of Poetic Realism, therefore, consists in the manner in which it describes reality, which is not one of analysis, investigation, examination from the standpoint of some philosophico-moral or sociological theory, but is content to be pure description. It is in essence optimistic, finding positive values in life without reference to transcendental sanctions. Poetic Realism follows immediately upon the Jung Deutschland movement and reaches its height in the development and clarification of the ideas of the earlier movement; though to begin with its difference of attitude

to the world around it, an attitude of acceptance rather than of revolt, was noticeably prominent. In the history of literature of the nineteenth century Poetic Realism occupies a position analogous to that of Classicism in that of the eighteenth century. It gives poetic expression to the view of life of a mature period of culture, of which the Jung Deutschland movement with all the exaggeration of a revolutionary period, full of unclarified ferment, was the herald. It owes something on the side of philosophic content to the materialistic philosophy of David Friedrich Strauss and Feuerbach; but at least as much on the literary side to the Romantics' discovery of the value of Stimmung and the importance of imagination and feeling. At the same time it rejects the extreme subjectivity and the fantastically marvellous of Romanticism.¹ It is essentially a middle-class movement; its subject matter is drawn from the bürgerliche world, considered in its widest sense as comprising middle-class society from the leisured classes to the handworker and the peasant, but excluding the proletariat; and its view of life and ethical code is a bürgerliche one. The characteristic and most successful expression of this new literary movement is the Novelle.

Such works as Otto Ludwig's play *Der Erbförster* and Gottfried Keller's novel *Der grüne Heinrich* are, of course, equally products of the movement, and if one writer can be singled out as representing the movement in its finest and most perfect form, that writer is Gottfried Keller. This line of argument would seem to lead to the conclusion that the German Novelle reaches its greatest heights in the works of Keller. But before coming to these works it is necessary to trace the development of the Novelle within the limits of Poetic Realism.

The Jung Deutschland writers had produced no actual Novellen which can claim to be of first-rate importance, for those of Laube, Gutzkow, Mundt, Kühne, Ungern-Sternberg are only of inferior merit. Nevertheless, they had manifested a great interest in the genre, and precisely during the years in which they had dominated German literature there had been numberless collections of Novellen published.² It was, as Mundt had pointed out, the most popular and fashionable literary form, partly no doubt because it could be so easily and unobtrusively utilized for social and political propaganda. The demand that literature should concern itself with the actual conditions of life had been answered rather in the sense that it plunged into polemical discussion of existing abuses and prevailing tendencies. It was essentially a literature of the town and of a sophisticated public. With the advent of the Dorfnovelle it had discovered, in the place of a negative critical attitude, a more positive subject matter. But even so, in the Dorfgeschichten of Auerbach, at any rate, there had been implicit the contrast between the unreality of town life and the newly discovered reality and nature of the life of the peasants. The contrast is developed rather too schematically in the story *Die Frau Professorin*, which is in so far a representative example, as it illustrates the whole attitude of that generation to the country. This may be said to be characteristic of the transition from Jung Deutschland to the attitude of Poetic Realism towards its new subject matter. Later writers are content to concentrate upon the reality of country life without necessarily having to bolster up their point of view by reference to the antithesis town-country.

Better still than in Auerbach's story the transition is

exemplified in the work of Immermann, *Münchhausen, eine Geschichte in Arabesken*, which may serve as a starting-point for a consideration of the development of the Novelle within the limits of Poetic Realism. Immermann was a critic of his age, and his two novels *Die Epigonen* and *Münchhausen* describe the decay of a sophisticated society, which had become a prey to falsehood and outworn conventions. *Münchhausen*, published in 1839, falls into two parts, a negative and a positive one. The negative side of the novel deals with the lying charlatan Münchhausen, and is intended to expose all the hollow shams of the aristocratic and industrial society of that period. It is an example of the genre 'Zeit- oder Tendenzroman', which deals generally in satirical form with the abuses of the age. But into this novel Immermann has woven an almost independent story, which represents as a contrast to the falsehood and unreality of social life, the truth and reality of country life amongst the peasants of Westphalia. These chapters were afterwards extracted from the original novel and, having been put together, formed the Dorfgeschichte or Novelle *Der Oberhof*, which has survived as a piece of imaginative literature, whilst the rest of the novel has long since ceased to be of interest except to literary historians.

Der Oberhof is only by courtesy a Novelle, for it remains a story torn out from its context, and not entirely comprehensible except by reference to that context. It cannot, therefore, lay claim to that severity of form which is required as an essential feature of the Novelle. Further, it contains many of those romantic and unreal elements which betray its inner connection with the decay of Romanticism. Nevertheless, it gives a vivid and sincere

picture of peasant life in Westphalia, accurately observed and described, and presents in the figure of the Hofschulze one of those characteristic peasant types, which appear again and again in the literature of village and country life.

(a) ANNETTE VON DROSTE-HÜLSHOFF

On a much higher plane, indeed one of the masterpieces of German Novellen literature, is the Novelle of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, *Die Judenbuche*, published in 1842. If *Der Oberhof* stands half-way between Jung Deutschland and Poetic Realism, and still with some rags of undiscarded Romanticism hanging about it, Droste-Hülshoff's Novelle can be said to represent Poetic Realism in a form which is hardly surpassed by anyone except perhaps by Gottfried Keller. In the great period of Novellen literature it is the first work which combines all those elements which constitute the distinctive type of the German Novelle; all that Goethe, Kleist and the Romantics had contributed to the creation of a new form: realism enriched by poetical depth and symbolical significance.

Annette von Droste-Hülshoff was in the first instance a lyrical poetess, whose descriptions of Westphalian landscape have a quality which no other German lyrical poetry possesses. Her prose writings are few, and consist only of sketches and descriptions of Westphalia, its landscape, people, traditions and customs. *Die Judenbuche* is her only narrative work in prose, though she wrote also a number of ballads and short epics. She calls it 'ein Sittengemälde aus dem gebirgigen Westphalen', though in her first reference to the project of writing it she describes it as 'eine Kriminalgeschichte, die sich in Pader-

born ereignete, von rein nationalem Gehalt'—the word 'national' having here the significance of 'local', belonging essentially to the district in which the events take place. The point is significant because it introduces a new factor in the Novelle of this period, a factor which is absent from the Novelle in its original form, namely the utilization of local colour as an important ingredient in the events that form the subject matter. It goes hand in hand with detailed nature description which occurs to a much greater extent in the Novellen of Adalbert Stifter and Theodor Storm. The more or less detailed elaboration of the setting—the Milieuschilderung—now becomes a permanent element in the Novelle. It is noticeable that the most important writers of this period—Droste-Hülshoff, Stifter, Ludwig, Storm and Keller—nearly always make use of definitely localized settings for their stories—Westphalia, the Bohemian Forest, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein, Switzerland—and that the incidents and characters of the stories are so closely connected with the definite locality in which they are set, that their very existence appears to be conditioned by it.

The source of *Die Judenbuche* is an incident which occurred in a village in Westphalia in the middle of the eighteenth century. Records of the incident existed in the family archives of the author's family, and had been edited and published by her uncle under the title *Geschichte eines Algierer Sklaven*. In most critical editions of Droste-Hülshoff this original version is published as an appendix, and it is extremely interesting from the point of view of the technique of the Novelle to see the alterations which the poetess has made in the original story. The change in the title itself is significant: that aspect of the story—

the years which the hero spends in slavery—is passed over by Annette as of no importance from her point of view.

Heyse's test applied to this *Novelle* yields the following result: a young peasant murders a Jew to whom he owes money and, having concealed his body under a beech tree in the forest, disappears from the neighbourhood. Twenty-eight years later he returns in disguise, and after living for some time in his native village hangs himself on a branch of the tree under which the body of his victim had been concealed. This synopsis suggests something of the essential quality of the *Novelle*; but it is much less adequate as a synopsis than the five lines which Boccaccio uses to describe one of his *Novellen*. The events are certainly more important in themselves than the events of Goethe's *Novelle*, for instance—which were submitted to the same test—but Droste-Hülshoff's story is a piece of realistic literature far removed in style and intention from the abstracter methods of Goethe's later classicism. It is and purports to be 'eine Kriminalgeschichte' and the events which it relates are such as will hold the attention independently of any additions in the way of symbolization or *Stimmung* which the poetess may add. The description of Friedrich Mergel's childhood, his drunken father and humiliated mother, the poaching and illegal traffic in timber, the midnight raids and scuffles—all these things have intrinsic interest. But the real 'Falke', to use Heyse's expression, is the tree itself; which has ceased to be merely a piece of scenery, and has become a symbol: a symbol of some more primitive conception of justice than the laws which the modern state has devised. The roots of the *Judenbuche* are in the Old Testament, in the

days when the rule of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, was valid. Its branches overshadow the whole story with the sinister, long-enduring sense of retribution. After the death of their co-religionist, the Jews of the village bought the tree and carved into it with an axe a Hebrew inscription. This is printed in the text of the *Novelle* in Hebrew characters. At the end of the *Novelle*, when the dead body of the hero Friedrich Mergel is discovered hanging in the branches, the translation of the inscription is given: 'Wenn du dich diesem Orte nahest, so wird es dir ergehen, wie du mir getan hast'. The translation of the inscription at the very end—at least for those who are unable to read Hebrew—produces in the reader something in the nature of a thrill, in so far as it casts a light back upon the whole sequence of events and underlines, as it were, the real significance of the story. The same method, though infinitely more crude and sensational, is often employed by modern short-story writers—when they keep throughout the story a secret which only the last line reveals. But the *Novelle* does not as a rule descend to these melodramatic surprises at the end, which lie rather within the province of the short story. In the *Novelle* the *Pointe* or surprise or *Wendepunkt*, as it is variously called, is usually of a less sensational nature, and in the *Novellen* which are now to be considered almost disappears.

One point is worth observing in the technique of the story: when Friedrich Mergel returns to his village after an absence of twenty-eight years, he gives himself out to be someone else—a cousin of his who had disappeared at the same time as himself—and is not recognized by the villagers as the murderer. The reader is not told whether

he is Friedrich Mergel or not; indeed he is led to believe that it is the cousin, who relates what is in reality a fictitious account of Friedrich's death. So there is no possibility of psychological analysis—no account of the process of remorse which goes on within him and drives him to suicide. After living in the village for some time he disappears: by chance some time later the body is found, already half decayed, hanging in the tree—and with that discovery the reader is for the first time assured that it really was Friedrich who came back to the scene of his crime. By this means the poetess can produce her startling effect at the end.

A comparison of *Die Judenbuche* with two early Novellen—the two earliest which fall within this survey: Goethe's *Der Prokurator* and Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert*—will show how the genre has developed from the original form, and what similarities it has retained. It is, to begin with, quite clear that *Die Judenbuche* is very much more akin to Tieck's Novelle than to Goethe's. Goethe's story is placed in a purely generalized setting—which indeed he calls Genoa, but takes no pains at all to describe; whereas *Die Judenbuche* depends for its particular effect upon the description of the exact locality, its people, customs and landscape. It has, however, this point of contact with *Der Prokurator* that it deals with a moral problem, that the principal character is in both instances a responsible moral being who recognizes the validity of moral laws and his or her own subjection to them. In Tieck's Novelle the characters are moved by blind impulse and instincts, and what they do and what befalls them is part of the unaccountable nature of the universe just as natural forces are. Both Tieck's and Droste-Hülshoff's Novellen are

Stimmungsnovellen—with this difference that in *Der blonde Eckbert* the Stimmung pervades the whole story, whereas in *Die Judenbuche* the Stimmung is a retrospective one—is not engendered until the end of the story when it flows back and envelopes the whole series of incidents in memory. Both the Romantic and the later Novellen owe a great deal to irrational elements; but in Droste-Hülshoff's work the irrational is not exploited for its own sake with the deliberateness which Tieck employs, but asserts itself as it were inevitably, as an ethical factor, appearing as the force which drives the murderer back to the scene of his crime and compels him to expiate it by a voluntary death. It may be pointed out that this irrational element is very much heightened by the fact that the reader is never told that the murderer has any stings of remorse, and that therefore he never sees the rational and logical steps which lead him to suicide. Unlike Tieck's Novelle, *Die Judenbuche* does not deal with a purely fantastic world but with the world of reality. It is again in essence a piece of gossip, raised to the level of literature, but with differences: (1) it is now a piece of village gossip, rather a sensational piece, it is true, and one which embodies an exceptional event; (2) it is not merely an incident and its effect upon a person or group of persons which is related, but the preliminary events which lead up to the central incident are also carefully recorded—the account of Friedrich's father and his first marriage; (3) something has been added by the poetess which may be called Stimmung or poetical vision or symbolical value, and this shifts the centre of interest from the mere events narrated, as in a Novelle of Boccaccio, for instance, to the ethical content.

(b) ADALBERT STIFTER

In the writings of Adalbert Stifter the actual incidents are reduced to a minimum of importance, and if Heyse's test were applied to them the result would in most cases be extremely disappointing, for the element of the exceptional, the extraordinary or the sensational is almost entirely lacking. Indeed, in Stifter's *Novellen*, the form has so fundamentally changed that it is at least doubtful whether they can really be classed as *Novellen*. Nor did the author himself call them thus, but rather *Studien* or *Erzählungen*. But they have at least as much claim to be regarded as *Novellen* as the later stories of Tieck, and are intrinsically of much greater literary and poetical value.

Stifter was born in a small village in the Bohemian Forest; and it is as important a fact about his writings as the fact that Droste-Hülshoff was born in Westphalia, and Theodor Storm in Schleswig-Holstein. His first story was written when he was thirty-five years old—in 1840. His writings consist of two sets of *Erzählungen*, which were published under the titles *Studien* and *Bunte Steine*. The *Studien*—thirteen in number—were written between 1840 and 1845; the *Bunte Steine*—six stories—appeared in 1852. There are further seven *Erzählungen* written at various times between 1844 and 1866 which are not included in either of the above-mentioned collections. In addition to these works Stifter wrote a novel *Der Nachsommer* which appeared in 1857, of which Nietzsche said that it was one of the finest pieces of prose in the German language; and an historical novel, *Witiko*, which appeared in 1867.

The epic writer has two possible functions, to narrate and to describe: 'berichten' and 'schildern'. Narration deals with the sequence of events in time; description with the juxtaposition of things in space. Both functions are present in all epic works, but sometimes one, sometimes the other predominates. When the former predominates the work becomes more dramatic, more exciting: when the latter predominates the effect is more contemplative. Kleist is the type of the epic writer as narrator: the whole stress is laid upon the events which succeed each other in point of time so swiftly that there is no opportunity for mere description, which by its very nature has a retarding effect. Stifter is the type of the epic writer as describer: the whole stress is laid upon the descriptions of nature in which the events merely appear as episodic disturbances—hardly more. Where, in Kleist, all is movement and swiftness, in Stifter all is tranquillity and leisureliness. They stand as far as the *Novelle* is concerned at the opposite poles of epic art: half-way between them, but with a distinct bias towards the descriptive side, stands Gottfried Keller. And just as in Kleist the incidents recorded are exceptional in their violence and wildness, so in Stifter they are of the simplest most ordinary kind. The tension is everywhere of the slightest; the dramatic moments are rare, and when they occur they are lacking in intensity because the author is clearly not concerned to make the most of them. His interest is in other things.

The actual subject matter of most of his stories deals with everyday domestic events: two children cross the mountains in the winter and lose their way in the snow, but by a piece of good fortune discover a cave in which they pass the night and so are preserved from death

(*Bergkristall*); a youth goes on a visit to his uncle, an eccentric old bachelor, passes some months with him, and by his candid nature wins the old misanthropist back to a certain degree of human affection and belief in humanity (*Der Hagestolz*); a married couple who have long been parted meet again after years and are reunited through the danger of death to which their son is exposed (*Brigitta*). But this concentration of Stifter upon the everyday, the unexceptional, is a definite artistic procedure with him. In the preface to *Bunte Steine* (published in 1852) he explains and justifies his methods: 'It was once remarked in criticism of me that I describe only that which is small, and that my characters are always ordinary characters. If that is true I am now in the position to offer my readers something that is still smaller and more insignificant'.³ (The attack upon him to which he here refers is probably that of Hebbel, to whom Stifter's whole art was distasteful. Later on when Stifter's novel *Der Nachsommer* appeared, Hebbel defied anyone to read it to the end. In effect, Hebbel's art is the exact antithesis of Stifter's.) That which is 'still smaller and more insignificant' to which he refers are the stories in *Bunte Steine*, which are all concerned with children. He proceeds:

But since we are talking of that which is great and that which is small, I will expound my views on this point, which probably differ from those of many people. The stirring of the air, the rippling of water, the growth of corn, the movement of the sea, the growing green of the earth, the glowing of the sky, the shining of the stars are what I consider great: the thunderstorm that approaches in splendour, the lightning which destroys houses, the tempest which drives breakers before it, the volcano in eruption, the earthquake which overthrows whole countries, are for me not greater than the

phenomena mentioned above. Indeed I consider them smaller, because they are merely effects of higher laws. They make their appearance in isolated instances and are the results of special causes. The force which makes the milk in the saucepan of a poor woman rise up and overflow is the same as that which drives up the lava in the volcano and makes it roll down over the slopes of the mountain. These phenomena are merely more apparent and attract more forcibly the attention of those who are uninformed and unobservant.³...

It will be noticed that in the list of things which Stifter describes as great, every phenomenon is a permanent state, not a passing startling event; and that it is the former things which he considers worthy of observation and description, not the latter. In view of the essential nature of the *Novelle*, which consisted in the striking event, the *Begebenheit*, the something startling and exceptional which, falling like a bolt from the blue, befalls the characters, it may well be asked whether Stifter's whole conception of what is worth recording does not in itself constitute a rejection of the *Novelle* as a form. In any case it must be admitted that he strains the form to its utmost limits, by elaborating the nature description to such an extent that the events—which are the essential core of the *Novelle*—are almost lost sight of. Generally speaking, in the development of the *Novelle* as a form in German literature, there has been a tendency to minimize the importance of the actual event—'die unerhörte, sich ereignete *Begebenheit*'—which in Romance literatures receives the main, often the exclusive attention, and to stress instead some other element—it may be ethical significance or the supernatural or symbolical value or *Stimmung*. Here in Stifter another example of the same tendency is apparent—the actual events in his case being

sacrificed to the description of nature. And it is from this side that Stifter must be approached as a writer. These permanent aspects of nature—such as he enumerates them in the preface to *Bunte Steine*—are his real subject matter. In most writers, in whose works external nature plays an important part, it is there as a background, often a very important background, for the human beings who carry on the action of the plot. They may be profoundly influenced and conditioned even by the nature in which they live, so that they are incomprehensible and meaningless taken away from their particular setting—compare, for instance, the characters of Storm's Novellen or of Thomas Hardy's novels in England—but they are nevertheless the foreground, the element with which the author and the reader are mainly concerned. However dynamic nature may be in such works in its effect upon the human characters, it still remains merely background. But with Stifter this is not the case. The real subject matter of his stories is not the doings of a person or group of persons who pass across the surface of nature, but nature itself is the subject matter—in its permanent states, and in its gradual changes through spring, summer and winter. The characters are *merely* foreground; moving points against the enduring grandeur of the landscape. In nature, then, for Stifter that is great which is permanent, enduring, undisturbed—states, not incidents; the ordinary, not the exceptional; and so too in human nature. In the preface to *Bunte Steine* he continues:

As it is in external nature, so it is also in man's inner nature. A whole life devoted to justice, simplicity, self discipline, reasonableness, activity within its own circle, admiration of beauty, completed by a serene and calm death is what I call

great; powerful emotional disturbances, fearful outbreaks of anger, the lust for revenge, the excited mind which is eager for activity, tears down, alters, destroys and in its excitement often flings away life itself; these things I do not consider greater but smaller, as they are just as much the products of individual and special forces as tempests, volcanoes, earthquakes. We are concerned to discover the gentle law whereby the human race is guided.

Thus in the sphere of human nature as in that of external nature there is an exact parallel with regard to the things which Stifter considers worthy of observation and description: states, not incidents, though the latter may be more exciting and startling: the life devoted to justice and charity, rather than the outburst of hatred or anger: the enduring, not the episodic. And here too the subject matter is unsuitable for the *Novelle*, whose very essence it is to present the exceptional incident. So that Stifter forces the *Novelle* as a form—with a very gentle force certainly—to do the very opposite of that which is its function: to reproduce permanent states of things instead of the interruptions to those permanent states. Stifter would make the *Novelle* describe a long uneventful summer day, the sky cloudless from morning to evening, passing imperceptibly from one shade of colour to another. But actually it is the business of the *Novelle* to describe the thunderstorm, which arising unexpectedly shatters suddenly the calm and serenity and then passes away leaving crops beaten down and houses destroyed by lightning. The preface to *Bunte Steine* may be regarded as a manifesto of the aims of the new Poetic Realism; for Realism is concerned with the everydayness of life rather than with its exceptional moments,

and the Poetic Realism of the middle of the nineteenth century, unlike the thoroughgoing naturalism, fifty years later, looked upon life and found it good, and recorded with loving and minute care the details of existence. The same tendency exists in Gottfried Keller, though it is indulged less frequently and less circumstantially. Stifter is an extreme case both in theory and in practice. In all the other writers of this period the 'event' is accorded much greater importance, and is frequently of so striking and even sensational a character as to serve very well for the 'unerhörte Begebenheit' which is requisite for the Novelle. Nevertheless, even though it be admitted that Stifter represents the practice of Poetic Realism in an extreme and perhaps even abnormal form, it is clear that the Novelle of the middle of the nineteenth century, as the characteristic expression of that movement, has very substantially changed its form and function, and that in its choice of subject matter it is much less concerned about the extraordinary and exceptional than it was during the Romantic period.

Stifter's literary career began with two Novellen, *Der Kondor* and *Feldblumen*, which do not yet reveal his specific qualities: *Der Kondor* has similarities with the later stories of Tieck; *Feldblumen* is still under the influence of Jean Paul. With his third story, *Das Heidedorf*, Stifter enters upon his special province, the description of life and landscape in his home country, the Bohemian Forest. Most of his Novellen are set in this district. His nature description reaches its height in the description of the forest. *Der Hochwald*—one of the finest of his Novellen—has been called *Das Hohelied des deutschen Waldes*. Three of the Novellen and indeed three of the finest have

however more exotic settings: *Brigitta* deals with life on the Hungarian plains; *Zwei Schwestern* takes place mainly on the shores of Lake Garda; whilst *Abdias*, the most tragic and perhaps the greatest of all Stifter's Novellen, describes life in the north of Africa, though the hero passes the latter part of his life in a valley in Upper Austria.

As is natural where the stress is laid upon description rather than narration, these Novellen acquire a greater spaciousness of form: such events as occur are recorded with a certain leisureliness which is in striking contrast to the concise form of the Romance Novelle—the inevitable result is that they are very much longer than the Novelle in its basic form. Many of them—like *Abdias*—narrate the events of a whole life-time or a considerable span of years. Where the action is concentrated round a single incident, that incident is rarely of a sensational kind, but may be nothing more than a heavy snowstorm (*Bergkristall*); a hailstorm (*Katzensilber*); a drought and its breaking (*Das Heidedorf*). These Novellen of Stifter are by no means exciting, but, for those who have time and patience to read them, they have a quiet, virginal beauty alike in their prose style, in the characters and incidents which they present, and in the spirit in which they are written.

Stifter is a writer who was for a long time neglected but is now coming into his own, and is gradually being recognized as one of the minor classics of the nineteenth century. And whilst creating a type of prose work which bears the unmistakable imprint of his own temperament and character, so that he has had no followers and no imitators, he has yet preserved perhaps more than any other writer that sense of traditional values, of the im-

portance of all that has been gathered in the past and handed down from earlier generations. There is a great deal of Goethe in Stifter's attitude to life—not perhaps the Goethe of *Faust*, but the Goethe who was a patient and careful observer of nature in every aspect: Stifter is a more specifically bürgerliche Goethe. The two fundamental activities of his mind can be described as collecting and cherishing: the collecting of countless specimens of nature and art—his novel *Der Nachsommer* is full of collector's activities—and the cherishing, with pious care, of all that has proved its worth and value for humanity. He lived in a period in which the Bürgertum was not yet shaken and undermined in its foundations. The value and importance of possessions—of material possessions—was an article of faith in such an age. Already Goethe had recognized the poetry of inherited possessions, of the loving and patient additions made to increase the store for the next generation, whether in works of art or buildings or land. It was not the mere greed for wealth, but a finer spirit—a sense, perhaps a mistaken one, that a man's value was heightened by the possession of things which were recognized as having worth in themselves. Poetic Realism was definitely a bürgerliche movement: its greatest writers, Stifter, Keller, Storm, were characteristic Bürger, who believed in the ideals of their class and the attitude of mind to which the movement gives expression is a bürgerliche view of life. Perhaps for this reason it produced no tragedy—for the ecstasies and agonies of tragedy are sometimes alien to that view of life. The Novelle, in essence a bürgerliche poetical form, supplies the nearest substitute for tragedy in that bürgerliche age.

(c) OTTO LUDWIG

Otto Ludwig carries on in his narrative works as in his drama, *Der Erbförster*, the traditions of a realism which is closely connected with a particular locality. He is the poet of Thuringia, as Droste-Hülshoff had been of Westphalia and Stifter of the Bohemian Forest. Ludwig would have wished to take his place in literature as a dramatist, and the whole of his life was spent in unremitting but also unavailing attempts to master the dramatic form. Of the several plays which he wrote and planned only two attained to anything like artistic form—and even with regard to these, *Der Erbförster* and *Die Makkabäer*, the opinions of critics are greatly divided. As a side issue he wrote epic works also—to use his own expression, his stories ‘wurden gleichsam hinter seinem Rücken geschrieben’—yet, whatever degree of excellence he accorded to them, there can be no doubt that his two village stories secure him his place in German literature rather than his dramas. *Die Heiterethei* is a humorous, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* a serious Novelle. These are his best achievements as a story-teller, though there are some half dozen shorter stories which have some claim to serious consideration. It may, however, be said that the specifically Ludwig quality, unadulterated by influences of other writers, is to be found in these two big Novellen only.

Whatever similarities there may be between the works of Stifter and Otto Ludwig—and these similarities are merely superficial ones, the choice of subject matter and its poetic realistic treatment—in their approach to literature and in their attitude and intention the two writers were entirely different. Both, it is true, possessed that intense

reverence for art as something second only to religion in the scale of human values. Stifter writes:

Art is for me something so high and sublime, it is for me... after religion the highest thing on earth, so that I have never considered my writings as works of poetry and shall never be so bold as to consider them as works of poetry.... Yet even though all spoken words cannot be poetry, they can be something else which is not lacking in every justification of existence. It was the aim of my writings, and will always remain their aim, to provide friends of similar tastes with an hour of recreation, to send to all of them known and unknown a greeting, and to contribute a grain of good to the building of eternity.⁴

The fundamental impulse with Stifter is an ethical social one; with Otto Ludwig the fundamental impulse is an artistic one: it is the desire to give form ('gestalten'), and to master a given form. The struggle for artistic mastery, the unquenchable curiosity into the nature of poetic form occupied Ludwig all his life, and his countless studies and theoretical essays and investigations bear witness to it. In all his work there is a great deal more deliberate artistry, more conscious manipulation of the form, than in any of the other writers of the period with the exception perhaps of C. F. Meyer. And this attitude of mind—that of the conscious craftsman—though it is undoubtedly a disadvantage for the writer of tragedies, is for the writer of Novellen perhaps an advantage, for as has been stressed from the beginning, the *Novelle* is a form which requires a maximum of artistic treatment. And this is due to the fact that it deals with an event, apparently purely fortuitous, which has to be endowed with the inevitability of fate.

Die Heiterethei (1854) is a village comedy in which

two lovers are separated by their own pride and obstinacy until the gossip of the village old women reveals to them both the happiness they are jeopardizing. It is a village version of the problem which Jane Austen solves with so much wit and charm and humour in *Pride and Prejudice*. But the two characters, 'Holders Fritz' and 'die Heiterethei' are two living, breathing human beings compared with all the synthetic creatures which people Ludwig's tragedies, into whom he strives in vain to breathe life enough to make his tragedies convincing.

Zwischen Himmel und Erde which appeared the following year (1855) is a bigger achievement altogether. If the difference between Roman and Novelle were one of length only, it would certainly have to be included under the former rubric, for it is longer than any work yet considered with the exception of some of the later Novellen of Tieck. But there is no doubt that in form and structure, in its concentration upon one centre of interest, it is essentially a Novelle. Even the characters who are immediately involved in the central conflict, almost the only persons who are mentioned in the story, are only four in number; and its main theme, to which everything in the nature of incident is subordinated, is the preservation of the integrity of the hero's conscience. Here in the Novelle the peculiar quality of Ludwig's genius found a much more suitable vehicle than in the tragic drama which was his aspiration.

The meticulous adaptation of means to end, the exact subordination and emplacement of every trait, a certain precise niceness and orderliness in construction: all these things the Novelle can assimilate. Even though they obtrude themselves upon the reader's attention they do not

detract from his appreciation. In tragedy the slightest obtrusion of artistic intention is damaging. That the presence of deliberate artistry should rather heighten the appreciation of a *Novelle* but hinder the surrender to the effect of a tragedy is a fact whose explanation lies in the very nature of the different genres, epic and drama, and is suggested in the two words: appreciation and surrender. That quality of conscious artistry and further the purposiveness of every incident, every trait even is a characteristic of *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*, as it is characteristic also of Goethe's *Novelle*, and in contemporary literature of Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*. All three works, widely different as they are in every other respect, have this heightened quality of style in common.

The poet Wilhelm Hauff made the distinction between the *Novelle* and the tale consist in this, that a tale could easily be re-narrated, merely by allowing the memory to follow the natural course of events recorded, whereas a *Novelle* could be re-narrated from memory only by very careful thought, because the order of events was not the natural one, but had been altered for the sake of effect.⁵ That is, of course, only one particular aspect of the fact already noted, that the *Novelle* is a very deliberately artistic form. This particular aspect of the form of the *Novelle* can be observed in *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*. Let it be assumed that the natural order of events in chronological sequence is *abcde*... and so on—each letter standing for some incident or stage in the story to be related. Now observe the order in which the events are presented by Ludwig: the story begins with the end (call it *e*). The hero, already an old man, sits in his garden and recalls his past. (It may be noted that this is a

very frequently used technique in the Novelle—and is often to be found in a writer who is given to writing ‘Memory’ Novellen such as Storm.) The author then narrates that past, beginning with the moment at which the hero as a young man returns from his travels (*b*). Then he takes the reader back, in the memory of the hero, to the point in time still earlier, at which those travels began (*a*), and follows them up again to the point at which he returns (*b* again); then continues for a while straightforwardly—the main stretch of narrative, which in chronological sequence must be called (*c*). At a decisive point in the story he then jumps three decades and returns to the point at which the story began, and in which it also finishes (*e*) and finally narrates what has happened in between (*d*). So that instead of the logical sequence of events *abcde*, the formula for *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* is *ebabcd*.⁶ In the ordinary Erinnerungsnovelle—say *Immensee*—the formula will generally be *eabcde*.⁷

It is not easy to apply Heyse’s test to *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* and obtain a result which will be very illuminating. Two brothers, slaters, of whom one is over-conscientious, the other fraudulent, love the same woman. The fraudulent marries her and becomes jealous of his brother. In an attempt to murder him he is killed. The surviving brother abstains from marrying his sister-in-law because his conscience tells him that he desired the death of his brother. That gives the moral problem which is the core of the Novelle, but it has omitted at least half of that which gives the story its particular interest: namely, the setting; the life of the slaters ‘between heaven and earth’ on the tower of the church, where they are engaged in repairing the roof. At one point in the story the author

pauses between two exciting incidents to give an account of the slater's profession; and all that is connected with this particularized aspect of the life of the characters, namely the local colouring, assumes very great importance. As has been seen, in the original form of the *Novelle*, there was no room for local colouring, and all was left in generalization. In the writings of Poetic Realism generally, as indeed was inevitable from its attitude to reality, the description of what may perhaps be called attendant circumstance—the physical, material setting of the lives and incidents recorded—assumed much greater importance than it can possess in the more abstracted atmosphere of Classicism. It appears in Droste's story in the description of the *milieu* of the hero; in the stories of Stifter in the meticulous and loving description of landscape; in Ludwig's *Novelle* it is concentrated upon the actual *métier* of the two chief characters. Just as in some stories the characters and incidents are comprehensible only in relation to the landscape in which they exist or occur, so in Ludwig's story they have significance only in relation to their *métier*. The conflict between the over-scrupulous Apollonius and the unscrupulous Fritz acquires its whole interest from the stage upon which the action is performed, the scaffoldings between earth and sky, where the perilous trade of the slater is carried on. *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*, like Goethe's *Novelle* and C. F. Meyer's *Hochzeit des Mönchs*, is a very interesting work considered purely technically as an instance of the genre *Novelle*—revealing traditional elements and innovations in conflict one with another. All three works are, significantly enough, works in which the conscious artistry of the author is apparent. What are now the cha-

characteristics of Ludwig's story as a Novelle? It has, in spite of its great length, the necessary concentration upon one conflict—this quality it has in a very high degree, wherein it bears a certain resemblance to *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Its characters are restricted to just those four who are immediately involved in the conflict. (It will be remembered that in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* the strict framework of the Novelle was enlarged to admit a great number of other characters who did not in any way participate in the central conflict.) It has a very definite Wendepunkt or point of highest interest from which it takes a turn in a direction not foreseen—namely, the scene in which Fritz attempts to murder Apollonius and is himself destroyed; further, it possesses very marked characteristics—what Heyse calls 'eine starke Silhouette'—which distinguishes it from every other Novelle which deals with a similar theme of the love of two brothers for the same woman. Finally the artistry with which it is composed tends to force itself upon the attention. All this is true—and yet, all that gives *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* its characteristic quality is to be found in elements which are not inherent in the Novelle in its original form. First the specific setting, the elaboration of the local colour, in this case in the description of the slater's *métier*. The idea of murder—the central incident of the Novelle—is suggested to Fritz by the very fact that he and Apollonius are daily working in peril of their lives, and that a single false step may hurl them down to destruction. This is an enlargement of the scope of the Novelle due to Poetic Realism; and it may be pointed out here that it is an enlargement of its scope which is full of danger for the genre as such. When it becomes the main interest, as it

does with the Naturalistic writers of the end of the century, the Novelle can no longer exist, but becomes suffocated under the mass of material circumstance. Secondly, one of the main interests in Ludwig's Novelle is the psychology of the two principal characters: of Apollonius 'der Federchensucher', as Ludwig calls him, in whom he aimed at drawing 'the type of the born moral hypochondriac', the type of the over-conscientious; just as in Fritz he aimed at drawing the type of the under-conscientious. In regard to the two characters it may be observed that Apollonius is by no means a type of over-scrupulousness, or indeed a type of anything at all, but an over-scrupulous individual; and again Fritz is not a specimen of the under-conscientious, for during the whole of the story he is tormented by his conscience for the original fraud which he had perpetrated, and it is precisely the torments of conscience which drive him to attempt murder. One other point with regard to Apollonius: he is in the ethical world what Otto Ludwig is in the aesthetic world; and if Ludwig calls him a moral hypochondriac, Apollonius might turn upon his creator and call him an aesthetic hypochondriac. For Ludwig is just as much a 'Federchensucher' in aesthetic matters as Apollonius in moral ones.

To return to the second point: the fact that a great deal of the interest of the story lies in the psychology of the hero is, on the whole, something new in the Novelle, certainly an element which was not present in the genre in its original form. Though the psychological element had been developed to some extent in earlier German Novellen—as for instance in the *Künstlernovellen* of Hoffmann such as *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, where it is

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true the element of the abnormal and monstrous plays an important part also—it is with Ludwig's *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* that it really establishes itself as the essential content of the Novelle, as which it is then utilized by Paul Heyse and C. F. Meyer; and it is significant that Heyse was enormously impressed by the work and wrote to Ludwig to tell him 'wieviel ich Ihrer Novelle verdanke'.

It is not the business of the critic to blame an author for the type of character which he has chosen to present; but the fact that Ludwig has chosen the over-conscientious 'Federchensucher' Apollonius (though perhaps the term 'chosen' suggests a more deliberate activity on Ludwig's part than is true) has given to his Novelle an atmosphere of the arbitrary rather than of the inevitable and so detracted from a really tragic effect. Apollonius, like the characters in Hebbel's bürgerliche drama, moves in that suffocating atmosphere, which Hebbel calls 'die schreckliche Gebundenheit in der Einseitigkeit', the narrow ethical code from which they are unable to free themselves.

To sum up then the importance of Ludwig's *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* in the development of the Novelle, it may be formulated under three headings: (1) he has strengthened the significance of local colouring and given it a particular application in the description of the profession or *métier* (Gottfried Keller will make use of this form of local colouring later, though not with the same insistence as Ludwig); (2) he has discovered the element of psychology as a possible content for the Novelle; and (3) he has given the Dorfnovelle stylistic treatment, such as it had not received either from Gotthelf, Auerbach or even Droste-Hülshoff. It may perhaps be objected that Ludwig has stylized the Dorfnovelle too much, and

that in his use of stylistic tricks and ornaments he is creating a rather paradoxical form; a use of recurrent epithet, which in so sophisticated a subject matter and work as Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig* appears perfectly appropriate, may seem rather out of place in a chronicle of village life, where a greater simplicity is expected. However, with Otto Ludwig's *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* the Village Story becomes not merely a poetical genre but more specifically an artistic genre, and this was all to the advantage of later writers such as Gottfried Keller.

(d) FRANZ GRILLPARZER AND EDUARD MÖRIKE

Two isolated Novellen now come up for consideration by writers whose main claim to fame lies in some other province of literature. Both works may be regarded with some extension of the term as products of Poetic Realism, though both are such individual creations as to stand somewhat apart from the main tradition of the movement. These are *Der arme Spielmann* by Franz Grillparzer and *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag* by Eduard Mörike.

Der arme Spielmann appeared in 1848. Already in 1828 Grillparzer had written a Novelle, *Das Kloster bei Sandomir*—a story of sensational horror which belongs still to the Romantic period in feeling. Two travellers arrive at a monastery late at night; a monk tells them the story of a faithless wife who had been murdered by her husband and reveals himself at the end of the story as the hero of the incidents he has been relating. The Novelle was dramatized by Hauptmann under the title *Elga*.

Der arme Spielmann was written at the very end of Grillparzer's career as a poet, for though he lived until

1872 he published nothing of importance after the 1840's, and the three posthumous plays which were found in his writing desk by his executors were certainly sketched out and would appear to have been completed before 1848.

There are no Romantic elements in *Der arme Spielmann*, and it may quite legitimately be included under the rubric Poetic Realism, with however a more definite tendency to the individual-psychological than is usual in most works of this school. The general tendency in Grillparzer's dramas is towards a greater psychological realism in his character drawing, which reaches its summit in the character of Kaiser Rudolf in *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*. Friedrich Schlegel had said of the Novelle that it was particularly suited to convey a subjective mood and point of view indirectly and as it were symbolically. It is this subjective element in *Der arme Spielmann* which gives it a particular interest. The author meets an old fiddler on a fair day and gives him a coin. The fiddler uses a Latin tag which arouses the author's interest, who seeks him out in his attic and hears his story. Some time later on the news of floods in the neighbourhood of the town he seeks out the fiddler again and finds that he has been drowned in attempting to save his landlord's property from destruction. But that is merely the framework—the whole interest of the Novelle lies in the psychology of the old fiddler as he reveals it himself in his account of his own life. He is the most touching and naïve representative of that type of character which Grillparzer under some form or other continually draws: the character who is unable to adjust himself to life—the last and extreme expression of that timidity in the face of reality which was characteristic of Grillparzer himself. It appears in the plays in the

characters of Sappho, Banchan, Medea, Kaiser Rudolf, Libussa, and is always represented as due to some superior quality—it may be poetical, prophetic gifts, or philosophical insight, or excessive conscientiousness, but in every instance it is a disguise of the poet's own lack of adjustment to reality. In *Der arme Spielmann* it is represented not as the result of superior gifts but as the result of excessive simplicity and timidity. It would seem rather that Grillparzer had at last arrived at the truth about himself, and recognized that the quality in himself which prevented him from finding his proper place in the world of reality was not a virtue but rather a weakness. But together with this simplicity amounting to lack of intelligence goes also in the character of 'der arme Spielmann' that other simplicity which is synonymous with purity of heart. 'Der arme Spielmann' is one of the 'poor in spirit' who are mentioned in the Beatitudes. His timidity, stupidity, clumsiness are nothing compared with the shining quality of innocence and goodness which radiates from him. And this effect is achieved with singular skill, for the poet does not comment upon the Spielmann's story at all nor interpret for us the incidents related. The fiddler in the story of his life is far from wishing to impress his visitor: rather he is telling the story of his failures and incompetence in every situation in life in which he has found himself, and the total effect is not that we have been listening to the life of a fool, but that we have been listening to the life of a saint—who is unaware of his saintliness.⁸

In Grillparzer's later works he inclined more and more to dramatize himself,* even to endowing his heroes and heroines with his own individual predilections—this is

particularly true of Kaiser Rudolf in *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*. Here in his Novelle he has done the same thing in giving to his old fiddler his own love for the purely sensuous beauty of sound, apart from the logical connection of individual sounds to form a melody. The story is full of individual touches of what may justifiably be called Poetic Realism—amongst which a particularly striking one is the action of the old man in drawing a chalk mark on the floor of the attic which he shares with two labourers to mark off his particular province, within which he preserves an island of neatness and cleanness in the midst of the disorder and dirt of the rest of the room.

The element of the unusual, 'das Unerhörte', in *Der arme Spielmann*, does not exist in the events, but in the psychology of the principal character. The incidents—the death of his father, for instance—are in no way arresting or startling, and the changes they bring about are of importance only in so far as they affect his inner life. The turning-point in the story is the scene in which the humble Barbara, who loves him with a maternal affection, brings him the washing she has mended for him, and then leaves him because she is going to get married. *Der arme Spielmann* is certainly one of the most exquisite Novellen in German literature, and without doubt the most perfect of all Grillparzer's works: that is to say, that less than any single drama it affords an opening for the criticism that the form and the content do not exactly coincide.

If the incident in Grillparzer's story is of little importance and partakes in no wise of the quality of the startling or sensational, this is even more true of Mörike's little novelistic masterpiece, *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*, published in 1856. Mörike's chief claim to fame is as a

lyrical poet; but he also wrote a number of prose works, including a novel, *Maler Nolten*, to the writing and re-writing of which he devoted many years of his life. In addition to this he published a number of stories, none of which however would have received much attention had they not been the work of an already known poet, with the exception of two: *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*, and the fairy tale *Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein*, with its subordinate story *Die Geschichte von der schönen Lau*. The latter, delightful as it is, does not fall within the limits of this survey, since it belongs quite definitely to the genre fairy tale. It is the story of a water-sprite and forms a humorous pendant to Fouqué's fairy tale *Undine*.

Apropos of this *Novelle*, *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*, Hebbel wrote to Mörike that he admired the art with which the poet had caused a whole world to evolve out of a grain of mustard-seed. Adolf von Grolman, more concerned about the strict form of the genre than Hebbel, says: 'Precisely in *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag* the event which should specifically be the essence of the *Novelle* is as it were entirely absorbed by the broadly human and historical attendant circumstances in spite of the considerable charm of the whole story'.⁹ Little therefore as *Der arme Spielmann* fits into the strict idea of what a *Novelle* should be, Mörike's story does so still less. The two works must be regarded as a special type, in which the aim of the author is to reveal the characteristic qualities of a certain person, to give a character picture, not by means of description—which would certainly be outside of the province of the *Novelle*—but by showing the reaction of the character to a number of events which are not in themselves either unusual or startling, but have

merely so much importance as to set the springs of action in motion. It is true that in Mörike's story the incident is even less important than in Grillparzer's and more restricted in point of time. Where Grillparzer gives us a picture of a character by the account of his whole life, Mörike is content to give us a very short section of his life, and to reveal all the characteristic qualities of his hero within that restricted period. But the aim of both authors is the same: to present a complete picture of a given character by means of his reactions to a number of events. Substantially it is the procedure of the *Novelle* in its basic form, with two modifications. Instead of one striking event which reveals the character as it were in a flash of lightning, there are a number of smaller events which light up the character less vividly perhaps, but by their repetition more comprehensively. The second modification is inherent in the change from the single startling event to the succession of more ordinary events: the interest is shifted from the external event to the personality of the character which it helps to illuminate—another example of the general tendency of the *Novelle* in Germany to shift its point of interest inwards.

The subject matter of Mörike's *Novelle* is of the slightest: Mozart with his wife is on his way to Prag to conduct a performance of *Don Juan*. On the journey they stop at an inn and whilst Madame Mozart rests, Mozart wanders into a park, enters a summer-house, and in a fit of abstraction picks an orange from a tree. On the appearance of a gardener who accuses him of having spoiled a choice plant belonging to the Count, he sends a note to the owner of the house, apologizing for his action. It is the betrothal day of the son of the house, and the orange

tree was to be presented to his fiancée Eugenie. On the receipt of the note the Countess sends for Mozart, and his wife is fetched from the inn. They are entertained and fêted during the evening; the duet that Mozart has just composed in the summer-house is sung by the betrothed lovers, and Mozart sits down at the piano and plays the finale of *Don Juan*. The travellers spend the night at the castle and the next morning continue their journey in a coach which the Count presents to them. Eugenie locks the piano upon which Mozart has played and hides the key; looking over the music which lies upon it, she notices with a sinister presentiment a song, the words of which seem to prophesy the early death of Mozart.

Here there is hardly any incident at all—certainly nothing that could possibly be described as ‘eine unerhörte Begebenheit’. The turning-point of the story is Mozart’s picking of the orange in a fit of abstraction. Such an incident might be related as a characteristic instance of absent-mindedness on the part of a great composer, but it would, on the face of it, hardly seem to be adequate to form the kernel of a *Novelle*. But out of it as from a grain of mustard-seed, as Hebbel said, Mörike has developed not only a picture of Mozart himself but also a picture of the rococo world of his time.

It is interesting to compare the different standpoints of Hebbel and the other critic of the *Novelle* quoted. For Hebbel the incident is merely the occasion for the development of a picture of the world—this is the dramatist speaking, of whom it is required that he shall present a picture of the world. For the other critic—who is the greatest purist in respect of the form of the *Novelle*—the incident is the important thing, ‘der eigentlich novel-

deed it reveals a certain amount of unjustifiable self-satisfaction. Severity of form had been from the beginning—even in the days when the Novelle was ‘eine kurzgefasste Darstellung...einer fesselnden Begebenheit’—an essential element in the Novelle, and presupposed that centre from which everything was organized. Indeed, the severity of form was more apparent in the Novelle in its original form than it was among the works of Storm himself and his contemporaries. But it is true, and perhaps he is the first one to recognize it, that the content of the Novelle had substantially changed, as has become apparent in following the development of the genre, and that necessarily with the change in the content there had gone hand-in-hand a change in the form. For the ‘presentation of an arresting event’, which had been the original content of the Novelle, Storm now claims that it can deal with the ‘deepest problems of human life’—Storm’s further claim that the Novelle is the sister of the drama, and has indeed assumed the function of the drama in modern times, is supported by him by quite inadequate and superficial reasons. At the same time there would appear to be a great deal of truth in the statement itself, though the explanation is to be sought in other causes than in those which he suggests.

The relation between the Novelle and tragedy is a very interesting one and has been debated from Storm onwards by a number of writers. It is no doubt not without significance that, in the second half of the nineteenth century when Novellendichtung in Germany was at its height, there was no tragic drama. As has already been suggested, tragedy is not the characteristic poetical expression of a bürgerliches age, such as the second half of the nineteenth

century undoubtedly was: the most characteristic writer of the period is Gottfried Keller, whose specific form of expression is the bürgerliche Novelle. Storm writing on June 26th, 1880, to Keller says: 'At any rate it is an article of my artistic creed, that a Novelle constructed upon tragic lines, if it is as it should be, should arouse tragic and not pathetic emotion' ('erschüttern und nicht rühren soll'). But the claim which Storm here makes for the tragic Novelle is scarcely fulfilled by any of his own works, since the effect of even his most unhappy stories is on the whole one of Rührung rather than of Erschütterung. It may be pointed out that in the very Novelle which was intended to demonstrate the tragic possibilities of the genre, *Der Herr Etatsrat*, there is no trace of tragic emotion aroused by the presentation of the pitiful fate of the two children, incapable of resistance to a brutal and perverse father. The emotions aroused are those of mingled pity for the unhappy victims and disgust at the character of the father.¹¹

Storm writes of his own Novellen:

My art as a writer of Novellen developed out of my lyrical poetry and at first yielded only 'Stimmungsbilder' or such individual scenes, in which the incident to be presented seemed to the author to contain a particular stimulus to poetical presentation. Connecting links woven in as allusions gave the reader the opportunity to picture to himself a larger complete whole, the whole destiny of a human being with the causes that set it in motion and its course to the end.¹²

The lyrical Stimmung element in his Novellen is most pronounced in the early works. Not that it is a creation of Storm's, but rather a legacy of the Romantic movement. A comparison between Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert*

and Eichendorff's *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* reveals the range of which Stimmung is capable: nothing could be further removed from the sinister tone of *Der blonde Eckbert* than the gay lightheartedness of Eichendorff's story. The weakness with Storm is that his range is extremely narrow, and that the prevailing feeling which all his early stories arouse is that of a gentle melancholy, a sense of the mutability of things. He was by nature of an elegiac turn of mind, with an intense attachment to the place of his birth, to the actual material things which surrounded him, to the customs and habits amongst which he had grown up.

His first attempt at a Novelle was a little sketch entitled *Marthe und ihre Uhr* written for a local publication, the aim of which was to record representative aspects of the life and customs of Schleswig-Holstein. In this early sketch the two elements of Storm's attitude of mind are already implicit; the two factors which make up poetic realism: an accurate observation and description of reality, and the imagination of the poet which plays upon them and evokes from them their poetic value. These two factors are necessarily inherent in all the writers who can legitimately be described as poetic realists—only in each one the realistic observation and the poetical transfiguring of reality will assume different forms according to the temperament of the individual author. A consideration of Stifter will reveal that his subject matter is mainly the eternal aspects of nature, the enduring qualities whether of external landscape or of human character, and his poetical transfiguration of these realities consists in seeing them precisely as enduring, permanent things, subject to and conforming with eternal laws. (In Stifter's novel

Nachsommer the realistic factor is concerned not so much with the sublime aspects of nature, as with nature under the hand of man—the cultivated nature of the garden—and with works of art, even down to furniture and house utensils, and all these things are seen also under the aspect of things created and maintained by conformity with permanent laws of being.) With Storm the realistic observation is directed upon nature in a more restricted, localized sense than with Stifter: Storm hardly ever moves away from the neighbourhood of his native town Husum. When the scene of the action is shifted for a time to a university town—almost the only alternative to the narrower background of Husum (Husum used here as an ideal name for the usually unnamed small town in Schleswig-Holstein in or near which the action of all his Novellen takes place)—the background is perfunctorily sketched in. External nature for Storm is the small grey walled town—‘die graue Stadt am Meer’ of his poems—set between a grey sea and a wide expanse of heath. In addition to the world of external nature, there is the world of indoor inanimate things, which Storm draws with the same loving care for detail as is found in the little Dutch painters. Lukačs says of these interiors of Storm that every piece of furniture is enriched by the glance of an eye that has lingered upon it lovingly.¹³ Internal nature is represented by the citizen of that town going about his everyday tasks methodically and conscientiously—whether it be farming, housekeeping, shopkeeping, doctoring or practising as a lawyer or magistrate.

The poetical transfiguring of this reality consists with Storm, in exact antithesis to Stifter, in seeing all these things under the aspect of mutability, as things which are

not enduring, but subject to the laws of decay and dissolution. So the prevailing Stimmung of Storm's Novellen is one of melancholy—but of melancholy combined with resignation. For the characters whom he draws are not beings of strong will: rarely do they take active steps to combat the misfortunes which threaten them; they remain passive and watch the clouds gathering which are afterwards to engulf them; they yield themselves up to the fate that overtakes them and suffer it with calm and resignation. In this respect it may be said that they are particularly suited to the form of the Novellen, which deals with events that befall people rather than actions which they undertake. In *Immensee* this aspect of Storm's characters is already apparent—indeed *Immensee* is in almost every respect a comprehensive example of Storm's whole methods—for the principal character appears to have failed to grasp happiness simply from a kind of lethargy of mind, a passive endurance of things, where he might have altered the course of events to his advantage by energetic action.

The effect of this prevailing Stimmung—however poetical and attractive it may be in a single Novelle—is to beget a certain feeling of monotony, of unrelieved similarity, if a number of Storm's Novellen are read one after another. And this is true even of the Chronicle Novellen, the six of which are published together under the title *Vor Zeiten*. They all tend to run one into another, so that it becomes difficult in memory to distinguish them one from another. Nearly all Storm's Novellen—a few of the later ones must be omitted from this generalization—are variations on the same theme: the theme of two people who love each other but fail to achieve happiness, or

achieve it only after dangers and difficulties have been surmounted. In effect the scope of Storm's ideas is extraordinarily restricted. Ermatinger says of him:

His thought-experience is the ethical form of the German family. Neither the state which nevertheless interfered trenchantly in his life, nor the universe as a whole exists for him as a poet, though they exist for him as a human being. The cosmic experience which was so extraordinarily fruitful for Hölderlin (in *Empedokles*) became thinned out with Storm to a sense of insecurity, to the apprehensive question as to the survival of the individual, which is answered in the negative. But all that builds up the family, maintains it or destroys it constitutes the basic problem upon which his Novellen are constructed.¹⁴

And in another place: 'How narrow is the circle of ideas of Storm'—he is comparing him here with the width and wealth of interest of Gottfried Keller.

For Storm as a creator the concept life shrinks down to the narrow province of German married life on the basis of the enlightened positivistic morality of the nineteenth century. The problem with which he is concerned is that upon which marriage is built up, namely love in all its forms and conflicts. That which maintains it physically and morally: health, truth, loyalty, purity. That which can destroy it: dangerous disposition. Thus the family stands in the centre of his attention. For him as a poet the subject matters: art, science, religion, the state, industry and commerce do not exist. His whole feeling, thinking, creating circles round the ideal of marriage as the guiding star of his life's belief.¹⁵

This judgment of Ermatinger is essentially true of all of Storm's Novellen, with the exception of the last one, *Der Schimmelreiter*, which has a strength and force which

no other work of his possesses. Even here, though the main theme—unique in Storm's works—is that of the strong, active, self-reliant man, defying the forces of nature, working on behalf of society, even though that society takes up a hostile attitude to him, yet it is interwoven with the domestic interests, which Ermatinger characterizes as the centre of Storm's Ideenkreis. But apart from this one exception, the generalization is correct: hardly anything touches Storm's creative imagination outside of the relationship of human beings to each other within the limits of the family. In the centre of his emotional experience is the unity of the family and round this centre all his interests revolve. Clearly a vast number of relationships, situations, problems are possible within that circle and these are utilized by him to the full. But he never ventures out into the world of wider interests. His range is 'ein bescheidenes Hausgärtchen'. It is even rare for him to draw characters in which the destructive force of passion, considered as an elemental force, is represented. When he goes to the past for his subject matter, in his Chronicle Novellen, he is not concerned with the past as history; he is still dealing with the same personal relationships, and all that distinguishes these stories from his stories of contemporary life is the colouring of the past—it would be inaccurate to call it historical colouring—and the deliberate archaic style of language which he adopts. Of what different treatment a Chronicle Novelle is capable can easily be seen by comparing Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas* with Storm's *Eckenhof* or *Zur Chronik von Grieshuus*. In Kleist's work the action of the Novelle is shifted right into the centre of historical happenings and connected with them at every point; in

Storm's work the action is just as domestically encircled and isolated from the world of historical events as it is in any of his contemporary stories of life in Husum.

Speaking to Heyse in the later years of his life, Storm regrets that a common acquaintance of theirs did not live to see 'die zweite Periode meiner Novellistik'. To which Heyse replied, 'Ja, als du in Öl zu malen anfingst' ('when you began to paint in oils'). And this distinction between Storm's earlier and later work as that between water colour and oil painting describes with some accuracy the difference between the two styles. The earlier Novellen deal with sentimental situations from which the maximum of Stimmung is obtained; the later Novellen deal rather with problems—though still problems within the range of family affections—and are written with a much greater intensity of feeling. The difference between the earlier and the later Novellen is as Heyse's metaphor suggests a difference of colouring; a greater depth and richness is apparent in the later works, though the subject matter has not essentially changed, but remained what it always was: the affectional life of the individual within the family. Only that in the later works this affectional life is exposed to and jeopardized by much intenser dangers than those of mere sentiment.

The 'water colour' Stimmungnovellen include such works as *Immensee*, *Späte Rosen*, *Im Sonnenschein*, *Auf der Universität*, *Auf dem Staatshof*, *In St Jürgen*, *Eine Halligfahrt*, *Beim Vetter Christian*, *Ein stiller Musikant*. Some of these were written after 1870, but on the whole it may be said that the change from the earlier style takes place about that year. Storm himself remarks that he proposes to attempt a different type of Novelle which shall not

depend upon Stimmung for its effect, and the first example of this new style is *Draussen im Heidedorf* (1871)—suggested to him like so many of his stories by an incident which came under his notice as a magistrate. It is one of the rare examples with Storm of love represented not primarily as a sentiment but as a devastating passion.

The Chronicle Novellen all fall within the years 1875–85. Opinions must necessarily differ as to their relative merits: but the consensus of opinion is in favour of *Aquis Submersus* and *Renate* as the most striking and successful of this group. The theme of *Renate*—that of a young priest who becomes infatuated with a girl who lives under the suspicion of being a witch—has been treated, with considerable modifications, by Wilhelm Raabe in *Else von der Tanne* and by Hauptmann in *Der Ketzer von Soana*.

The last group of Novellen—the grouping under content does not correspond exactly to a chronological division—contains such works as *Viola Tricolor*, *Der Herr Etatsrat*, *Karster Kurator*, *Hans und Heinz Kirch*, *Ein Bekenntnis*, and *Der Schimmelreiter*. All of these are Problemnovellen, and the problem is in every case (with the exception of *Der Schimmelreiter*) connected with the relationship between members of the family: the position of the step-mother in respect of her stepchildren and the former wife in *Viola Tricolor*; the relations between father and son in *Der Herr Etatsrat*, *Karster Kurator*, *Hans und Heinz Kirch*; between husband and wife in *Ein Bekenntnis* and in *Viola Tricolor*. In nearly every case Storm is building up upon a personal experience. In these later Novellen there is frequently a more pessimistic and gloomy strain than in the mood of resignation which informs the earlier ones. Towards the middle years of his life and in his later years

Storm underwent a number of painful experiences, in the death of his first wife, his exile for political reasons from his beloved Husum, in the distress caused by the drunken tendencies of one of his own sons: all these things intensified the elegiac sentiment of his earlier years.

His attitude to religion was a purely negative one. Like Keller and other writers of this period he had been influenced by the materialistic philosophy of the middle of the century: the theories of heredity and environment were accepted by him, wherein he seems to anticipate the ideas of the *konsequente Naturalismus*. In one of his most moving Novellen, *Karster Kurator*, one of the characters remarks: 'Do you think that the hour is indifferent, in which with the permission of all wise God a human being's life issues from nothingness?—I tell you every human being brings his life complete with him into the world; and all those who for centuries past have given as much as a drop to his blood have their share in it'. The same idea is expressed in the scene in *Aquis Submersus*, in which the hero finds the prototype of the cruelty in the face of the owner of the castle in the portrait of an ancestress.

The basic emotional standpoint of Storm in the face of the universe is one of dread or misgiving. It informs many of his poems and finds a particularly succinct expression in the poem *Schlaflos*:

Aus Träumen in Ängsten bin ich erwacht,
Was singt doch die Lerche so tief in der Nacht?
Der Tag is gegangen, der Morgen ist fern,
Aufs Kissen hernieder scheinen die Stern'.
Und immer hör ich den Lerchengesang;
O Stimme des Tages, mein Herz ist bang.

That is the underlying emotion of nearly all Storm's Novellen: a sense of the mutability of all existing things, and a feeling of fear in the face of the nothingness which confronts man at the end of life. For him to use his own words, 'Liebe ist nichts als die Angst des sterblichen Menschen vor dem Alleinsein'. Ultimately there is in the Novellen of Storm something depressing, distressing. He was himself never able to overcome a sense of the sorrow and distress of life, and it is with fear and mis-giving in his heart that he envisages the world.

With regard to the technique and external form of Storm's Novellen, the Erinnerungsnovelle is the characteristic one. This may take the form of a man recounting an incident of his youth, or merely recalling it to memory in a series of pictures (as in *Immensee*), or, and this is a very favourite method with Storm, the narrator of the story may claim to have found an old manuscript (as in *Aquis Submersus*): the appearance of 'a few very discoloured sheets of paper' is very frequent in these stories. The fiction of an old discoloured manuscript for the Chronicle Novellen is very useful to Storm in that it helps him to create a sense of the past by means of a slightly archaic style. Nearly all the Novellen of Storm are framework stories; they are told to an audience of worthy Bürger of Husum, to a little circle one may suppose consisting of the local magistrates, the doctor, the members of the learned professions generally—and the incidents and settings of the stories themselves are such as are consistent with this audience. The framework technique of *Der Schimmelreiter* is peculiarly elaborate. The first narrator finds in an old journal a story, in which story again a narrator appears. He finds his way into a Frisian house, in

which an old man (that is to say, the third narrator) tells him the actual story of the Schimmelreiter. This is a *tour de force* in the matter of framework technique which is only equalled by C. F. Meyer in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*.

To summarize now the contribution of Storm to the Novelle. His modifications of the form consist first in a somewhat excessive use of Stimmung as the poetic content in the place of the clearly outlined event of the original Novelle. Speaking of his story, *Draussen im Heidedorf*, he says: 'I think that I have given proof therein, that I can write a Novelle without the atmosphere of a definite Stimmung: an atmosphere (Stimmung) which does not develop itself of its own accord for the reader out of the facts narrated, but is contributed to the story by the author *a priori*'. This Stimmung is predominantly one of elegiac melancholy, of resignation in the face of fate, and of misgiving in the face of the universe.

Already in Storm the danger of sentimentality is present; in writers with a less severe artistic conscience and sense of form, this lyrical Novellenform—as Paul Heyse calls it—becomes a mere indulgence in sentiment to the destruction of the form. Even so Storm's treatment of the form, at least in his early works, constitutes a softening, weakening and blurring of outline; though in the later works a greater austerity is apparent. In the later works too he opens up the Novelle to the discussion of psychological problems, a line which will be largely exploited by Paul Heyse and later writers, so that towards the end of the nineteenth century the Problemnovelle becomes a recognized type. The subjects of Storm's Novellen are taken exclusively from the life of the family, and

the family is placed in the framework of a firmly established, unquestionably accepted *Bürgertum*.

(f) GOTTFRIED KELLER

Storm, like Stifter and Gottfried Keller, was the poet of the *Bürgertum* of the second half of the nineteenth century, considered as a definite form of life and society—firmly established and assured of itself and as yet unshaken by the advent of the disintegrating forces of socialism. The intellectual-political-social world in which Storm and Keller live is that of the materialistic-optimistic liberalism which dominated German thought during the middle of the last century in spite of a pessimistic undercurrent: 'diesseitig' (neither Storm nor Keller are concerned with transcendental sanctions) and 'lebensbejahend'. Keller affirms the idea which his predecessor Jeremias Gotthelf attacks from the side of organized religion. It is not hereby suggested that Keller is irreligious: only his religion is a 'diesseitige', which, renouncing any belief in or anticipation of a life beyond that of this world, lays its stress upon the accomplishment of the duties which life imposes upon the individual.

It has been pointed out that for Storm the characteristic form is that of the *Erinnerungsnovelle*—the single *Novelle* placed in a framework of memory, whether that memory consist in the personal memory of the narrator, or more indirectly and impersonally in the discovery of a faded manuscript—whereby the past is evoked with an atmosphere of sentiment, of longing or resignation, and the *Stimmung* evoked is necessarily an elegiac, sentimental one. For Keller the characteristic form is that of

the cyclical framework *Novelle*, the grouping together of a series of stories, which are connected by a similarity of theme or motive or intention, and held together by a framework, which is variously elaborated. This habit or perhaps constitutional tendency to see things in groups, amplifying and complementing one another, is in itself a proof of the wider, more organic and systematic view of life which is symptomatic of the epic standpoint. Keller's lyrical poems do not play the same important part in his literary output as the poems of Storm in his creative work. Though the Swiss writer began as a lyric poet, his whole tendency was away from the personal subjective lyric to the more objective art of the narrator. This transition in his art is a parallel to the transition in his personality from the individual person to the public citizen, and it is noticeable that a great many of Keller's poems are written in celebration of national and municipal occasions. But already in his early poems the tendency to write cyclical groups is apparent. It becomes the predominant form in his prose work. His early novel, *Der grüne Heinrich*—afterwards entirely rewritten—has in its form a certain likeness to the framework narrative. Though it is in intention an autobiographical work, and in its inner form an *Erziehungsroman* in the manner of *Wilhelm Meister*, it will be seen on examination to be rather a collection of episodic events held together by the framework of a biography. This impression is further heightened by the inclusion of various narratives which do not really form part of the immediate experience of the characters of the novel but are, as it were, let into the main narrative: thus quite early in the work the story of 'Meretlein' which can easily be detached from the con-

text as an independent *Novelle*. It may be noted in passing that this inclusion of independent *Novelle*-like elements in the main course of the narrative is characteristic also of the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes. That Keller is essentially a writer of *Novellen* and not of novels is revealed by the manner in which all his episodic characters and events are elaborated and given an independent importance to which, as ingredients of a novel, they are not entitled.

Apart from his two novels, *Der grüne Heinrich* at the beginning of his career, and *Martin Salander*—his least successful production—at the close, all Keller's prose work is in the form of *Novellen*, and consists of four groups of stories: *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, a collection of ten *Novellen* which appeared in two separate volumes with an interval of several years between them; *Die Züricher Novellen*, a collection of five *Novellen*; *Das Sinn-gedicht*, six *Novellen*; and the *Sieben Legenden*. With regard to these various collections, the framework varies considerably. *Die Leute von Seldwyla* and the *Sieben Legenden* are framework *Novellen* only implicitly; that is to say, there is no narrative framework to connect them outwardly; their interconnection consists in a unity which is imposed upon them by the similarity of subject matter in the various stories. In *Die Leute von Seldwyla* they are grouped round a certain entirely imaginary town and its inhabitants; in the *Sieben Legenden* the connection lies not only in the subject matter but in the consistent attitude of mind to all these miraculous stories of mediaeval saints which Keller presents. Certainly in the first volume of the *Seldwyla* stories and in the *Sieben Legenden* there is a very definite scheme in the arrangement of the stories,

their grouping being so arranged that they serve to support and contrast each other, and so heighten the effect of the whole work. In the second volume of the Seldwyla stories the arrangement is more fortuitous. In *Die Züricher Novellen*, however, the framework is more explicit. The first three stories are framed in a narrative which has independent value. Originally the work was to be called *Herr Jacques* from the character to whom the stories are told. Herr Jacques is a young gentleman of Zurich, who is discontented with his place in the scheme of things and is anxious to be an original. His godfather undertakes to make clear to him that originality consists in being such a person as is worthy to be imitated. 'Only he is worthy to be imitated who carries out properly what he undertakes and always achieves something solid in its due place, even if it is not something unheard of and fundamentally original.' This he succeeds in doing, and in converting Herr Jacques from his youthful mistaken ideas, by narrating the stories of three Zurich worthies, all of whom were original in their way.

The three stories are entitled *Hadlaub*, *Der Narr auf Manegg*, and *Der Landvogt vom Greifensee*—the action of the first two taking place in the Middle Ages, that of the third in the eighteenth century. With regard to this latter—one of Keller's most delightful works—it may be pointed out that it is itself a framework Novelle within a framework Novelle, for all of the principal characters who appear in it—seven in all—have their life histories related. *Die Züricher Novellen* are in so far an imperfect cyclical Rahmengeschichte, because the enclosing narrative comes to an end after the third story, and the two remaining stories are added without any reference to it.

Ursula is an historical Novelle, dealing with Switzerland at the time of the Reformation and the religious wars caused by the preaching of Zwingli. The fifth story is *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten*, which brings us back to the life of the small Bürger in Switzerland in the nineteenth century. However, the finest and most carefully worked out of all Keller's framework Novellen is *Das Sinngedicht*, and indeed the summit of this Novellenform in any language; for here the connection between framework and the Novellen contained in it is closer and more intimate than in any other work: the artistic perfection—the unity of idea which pervades the whole work—gives it a completeness and satisfying beauty, which is far removed from the clumsy makeshift work of Tieck in *Phantasia*. In no other such work—Boccaccio of course does not attempt anything of the kind—is the relationship between the stories told and the story which encloses them so organic. In most of the other cyclical frameworks the framework is merely there as a purely external means of connecting the individual stories, which occupy the centre of interest. In *Das Sinngedicht* the framework is itself a Novelle and indeed the *raison d'être* of the work, whilst the individual stories are there to support and elucidate the theme of the framework. And all the stories have a common motive: the problem of marriage. In his search for the right kind of wife, whom he eventually finds, the hero is assisted by the wisdom he gains from the stories told. The organic nature of the whole work is further heightened by the dialectical method employed in the story-telling: one story illustrates one point of view, whereupon the next story serves as a criticism thereof by representing another point of view. There are individual

stories in the other collections which are as good as or better than any included in *Das Sinngedicht*, but no complete work of Keller has the same perfection of artistry as a whole—unless it be the *Sieben Legenden*, where the organic nature of the work is less obvious.

Keller's attitude to the theory of the Novelle was a purely practical one. *Apropos* of a letter of Otto Ludwig about the *Leute von Seldwyla*, Keller wrote: 'I was again struck by the worrying about the construction, this *a priori* speculation, which is legitimate with the drama but not with the Novelle and such things. With this school (of writers) there is a continual search for the secret method, the prescription and the alchemist's elixir, which after all simply consists in doing the best one can in an unprejudiced manner'. And he adds in excuse for this outburst: 'That may sound the rough and ready method of an uncultured fellow but is nevertheless true';¹⁶ repeating in another letter the same rejection of *a priori* theories as to the nature of the Novelle: 'I am of the opinion that there are for novels and Novellen just as little *a priori* theories and rules as for the other genres....The idle talk of the scholiarchs is mere nonsense the moment they attempt to interfere in the creation of living works'.¹⁷

In spite of the fact that Keller cherished the plans of many of his Novellen for years before he actually worked them out (the inspiration of the majority of his works dates from the 'fifties, the actual execution does not take place until twenty years later), he is far less concerned about questions of form, consciously and theoretically, than Otto Ludwig. The form is with him not a deliberately thought-out principle, but an organic growth, asserting itself naturally and inevitably. His attitude, as is sug-

gested in the above quotation from his letter, is that of the honest and conscientious craftsman, doing the best that he can with his material, but taking delight in it, and allowing himself without misgiving the right to elaborate detail and to linger over ornament, in which he delights as an individual, even though the severity of the form may be loosened thereby. This gives to most of his works a richness and fullness which is perhaps incompatible with the severer form of the *Novelle*, and continually withdraws the attention of the reader from the main outline to the contemplation, generally the delighted contemplation, of some individual detail, which is embroidered and exploited until every possibility of curious, grotesque or fanciful interest has been extracted from it. The lingering over detail, however inimical it may be to the economy of the composition as a whole, is one of the great charms of all Keller's work. In this he resembles Storm, with the difference that Storm expatiates upon details generally for their sentimental value, whilst Keller expatiates upon them for their purely vital value.

It has already been suggested that Keller is amongst all these writers of *Novellen* the one who is most centrally epic, holding the balance almost perfectly between the two functions of narrating and describing but with that slight tendency to lay the greater stress upon description, which is entirely consistent with the principles of the literary movement of Poetic Realism, and consists in a feeling for the actual value and interest of natural things as such. Keller is one of those writers of opulent imagination who are aware—to use his own words—‘von dem goldenen Überfluss der Welt’, and the richness and inventiveness of his imagination reveals itself in his

delight in curious detail. Actual material things are a source of pleasure to him, and he will describe a whole catalogue of oddities—such as the collection of Züs Bünzlin in *Die drei gerechten Kammacher*—or elaborate a fantastical character, or paint in great detail a piece of pageantry, not merely for its value in the development of the story, but because it is in itself a source of pleasure to him. All this detracts from the purity of the form as the theorists of the Novelle usually conceive it:—it represents in effect the antithesis of the view held by Friedrich Schlegel that ‘sie das Lokale und das Kostüm gern mit Genauigkeit bestimmt, es dennoch gern in allgemeinen hält’; but it is here a question of Keller’s preference for actual concrete life to the rigidity of an abstract form. On the other hand it may be said that the element of the ‘event’, the ‘happening’ which is the core of the Novelle in its original form, receives a far greater prominence than in some of the works which have been discussed, where it is sacrificed to Stimmung, or metaphysical significance or even to mere description—as in Stifter’s stories. And with this renewed stress upon the happening as such comes also a firmer line in the construction of the story, so that it is generally easy in a Novelle of Keller to see the point at which the action reaches its climax and turns into a new and unexpected direction—the Wendepunkt, which Tieck demands; thus in *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*, the scene in which Sali strikes Vrenchen’s father; in *Der Schmied seines Glückes*, the scene in which John Kabys betrays his benefactor by seducing his wife; in *Kleider machen Leute*, the scene in which the tailor decides to propose to Nettchen. In all the stories of Keller it is not a question of the mere ‘event’ being sacrificed to any other element;

but rather of its being enriched and loaded, perhaps even overloaded with a wealth of attendant circumstance which to anyone but a sheer purist for style must be added delight. A Novelle of Keller in comparison with one of Goethe—not to go back to the classical example of Boccaccio—is like a picture of Titian or Paolo Veronese compared with the more severely linear compositions of the early Florentine painters.

With regard to the subject matter of Keller's Novellen, in spite of some excursions into history and exotic settings, it is generally drawn, as Storm's subject matter was, from the life of the middle classes and peasantry of the district in which the poet lived. *Die Leute von Seldwyla* consists almost entirely of stories whose subject matter is the Bürger or peasant life of Switzerland. But *Pankraz der Schmoller*—again a story within a story—starting off from a Swiss *petit bourgeois* setting takes the reader for the bulk of the incident to India. (See in this story, as an instance of Keller's almost wilful delight in apparently unimportant detail, the account of the two children pouring milk upon their Kartoffelbrei and making subterranean passages for it to flow through—an incident which, trifling as it seems, somehow remains in the memory.) In *Frau Regula Amrain und ihr Jüngster*, there is the same *petit bourgeois milieu*; *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* is a peasant story; *Die drei gerechten Kammacher* returns to the world of small tradesmen and their apprentices. In the second collection of the Seldwyla stories, the action of all the Novellen—with the exception of *Dietegen*—takes place in a bürgerliche *milieu*, ranging from that of the travelling apprentice to the owners of prosperous factories. In the midst of this predominantly middle-class

contemporary range of interests *Dietegen* goes back to the end of the fifteenth century and presents a story with tragic situations but with a conciliatory close in which the feuds between the rival Swiss states form the background.

In the *Züricher Novellen* there is a greater variety of subject matter in spite of the similarity of theme in most of the stories. *Hadlaub* deals with the life of the Minnesinger in the twelfth century who was instrumental in preserving for future generations the Manessesche Handschrift, one of the few important manuscripts of mediaeval German lyrics; whilst *Der Narr auf Manegg* describes the downfall of the celebrated House of Manegg two hundred years later in the fate of its last descendant. *Der Landvogt von Greifensee* gives an unrivalled picture of the rococo society of Zurich in the eighteenth century—including a delightful sketch of the aged Bodmer—and centres round the real but fantastically developed character of Salomon Landolf and the adventures of the five charming young women with whom he was at various times in love. None of these stories, in spite of their setting in the past, is historical in the sense that it introduces historical events of importance: the historical element consisting rather in the use of Zeitcolorit. But in *Ursula* Keller gives an epic picture of the sixteenth century with battle pieces, religious persecutions, heretical movements, which show that he could certainly have managed historical subjects on the grand scale. At the same time, considered as a Novelle, *Ursula* seems to be of all his works the one least suited to its form, and to resemble rather a sketch for an historical novel. In *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten* Keller returns to a *petit bourgeois*

setting, with Schützenfeste, quarrelsome Bürger and the naïve slightly ridiculous charm of the Biedermeier society.

In nearly all these stories—with the exception of *Pan-kraz* and *Frau Regula Amrain und ihr Jüngster* which are inspired by personal experience—Keller draws his subject matter from local sources—an incident recorded in a newspaper (*Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*) or a piece of local gossip (*Kleider machen Leute*). Actual events form the germ of which his Novelle is an elaboration—that is to say, that significantly enough his sources are generally in life and not in literature. But in the *Sieben Legenden* he is doing what so many of the earlier Novellisten did (Goethe in *Der Prokurator*, for instance), retelling stories already treated in literature. The immediate source of these legends was a collection published in 1804 by a certain Theobul Kosegarten. But these mediaeval saints' stories are remodelled by Keller to such an extent that the spiritual content of them is not that of asceticism but of a joyous acceptance of life. They represent a retelling of religious stories in the spirit of Keller's own 'diesseitige' and 'lebensbejahende' religion. The most famous of them is the last—*Das Tanzlegendchen*; but the whole group represents Keller's art at its finest.

The last collection of Novellen, *Das Sinngedicht*, has a greater variety of subject matter than is present in the earlier works. None of the stories deals with the 'Kleinbürgertum' of Switzerland which would appear to be Keller's special province: the social level has been raised in all of those dealing with contemporary life—in *Die arme Baronin*; *Regina*; *Die Geisterseher*—to one approximating to that of Goethe's Novellen; and we move in a circle of

leisured, cultivated people. With this shifting of the social scene comes also a more generalized treatment of *milieu*: and in this latest work of Keller there are none of those detailed and grotesque descriptions of reality which form the particular charm of the works dealing with the lower levels of society. Nor are the characters so highly individualized, whilst the element of oddity, of the 'original' type, disappears in the character drawing altogether. Two stories deal frankly with the exotic, *Don Correa* and *Die Berlocken*, both of them having literary sources. *Don Correa* is put together from the account of the lives of a Spanish admiral and a Spanish adventurer, both of them living in the sixteenth century. *Die Berlocken* is based upon an incident related in Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire*. The connecting link between all these stories is not, as in the other works, a local one, but a unity of motive: all of them treating some aspect of the relations between man and woman in respect of marriage. In so far as Keller is a representative of Poetic Realism, it must be said that in *Das Sinngedicht* the realistic element is almost absorbed in the poetic, and that of all his works, with the exception of the *Sieben Legenden*, it is the most poetically imaginative; at the same time it does not in any way represent a return to Romanticism.

So much for the subject matter of Keller's Novellen. Their specific subject matter must now be described. It has been shown that in Storm's work the content was extraordinarily restricted, and that whatever aspects it might assume, it was in essence the affectional life of individuals within the family with which he was dealing, and that a vast number of his Novellen were, not to put too fine a point upon it, love stories. However restricted

Keller's subject matter may be—and with the exception of his last two works, he deals almost exclusively with the middle and lower middle classes of the Swiss people—the intellectual and emotional content, the range of interests which he covers is very much more comprehensive than that of Storm: not only the affectional life of the individual (in *Das Sinngedicht* he is dealing not merely with individual love affairs but with the whole problem of marriage, with the relationship of the sexes regarded as a principle—that is to say, the basis of the work is not, as with Storm, a purely emotional, sentimental one but an intellectual one), but education (*Frau Regula Amrain und ihr Jüngster*), history (*Ursula*), social and religious questions (*Das verlorene Lachen*), political tendencies (*Martin Salander*), art (*Der grüne Heinrich*). Keller's art touches life at a far greater number of points than Storm's or Stifter's or Otto Ludwig's.

If it be asked what is the essential quality of all Keller's work the answer is that it is the expression of German Bürgertum in the middle of the nineteenth century. So too is Storm's but with a difference. For Storm 'das Bürgertum' is the setting, the established order of things which he loves and reproduces with an affectionate touch, because he feels himself secure in it, because it is the state of affairs which affords protection; but for Keller 'das Bürgertum' is a given setting indeed, but one to which he stands in a much more critical attitude; and though it affords him protection, it also imposes responsibilities. With Keller the social conscience is much more highly developed than with Storm: Storm writes from within 'das Bürgertum' as the private individual, Keller as the citizen. The characters of Storm's Novellen are all private

individuals, enclosed within their family life, which obscures for them their relationship to the state: from the characters of Keller's Novellen invisible strands go out which connect them with the wider life of the state.

This attitude, loving but at the same time critical of Bürgertum, accepting its protective setting but at the same time acknowledging the responsibilities of the individual towards it, this attitude accounts for the great importance which the idea of education plays in the works of Keller as a whole. In fact it may be said that in the majority of his works the paedagogic idea is present, and that the aspect in which the idea of the Novelle as a form is envisaged—namely the event striking into the life of the individual and modifying it—is practically always: what educational value has the event upon the character of the person whom it befalls? In nearly every story some character or characters is being educated, a test is applied to him—in this respect there is a similarity between Keller and George Meredith—and Keller, like a rather more benign but still *Old Testament* God, rewards or punishes according as his hero stands the test.—And this test will have successful results if the characters are in their essential being genuine, real, 'echt';—if they are shams their shamming is revealed and they are condemned by Keller to ignominy, poverty or ridicule. Thus the two brothers of the *Arme Baronin*, Viggi Störteler in *Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe*, John Kabys in *Der Schmied seines Glückes*; on the other hand Wilhelm in *Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe*, Strapinski in *Kleider machen Leute*, in spite of their folly and weakness, are fundamentally sound and so are rewarded with wealth and a beautiful wife. This paedagogic element exists in all Keller's works—in *Der grüne Hein-*

rich and *Martin Salander* as well as in the Novellen; it appears in its plainest and least assimilated form in *Frau Regula Amrain und ihr Jüngster*, which is actually nothing more or less than a manual on the education of a good citizen. So much so that a few years ago long passages from it were printed in the newspapers to admonish people of their duty to vote. This story, together with the last of *Die Leute von Seldwyla* stories, *Das verlorene Lachen*, seems to be an example of the paedagogic, discussional element in the Novelle getting the upper hand at the expense of the form. In spite of their thought content, from the point of view of pure narrative both of these stories, like so many of the later Novellen of Tieck, are extremely wearisome.¹⁸ Perhaps the further criticism may be permitted that in spite of his much vaunted and usually prevailing human kindness and charity, there is sometimes a little savagery in Keller's treatment of his unsuccessful characters, and more than one instance of lapses from good taste.

In most of the Novellen of Keller there is a strong element of humour: both *Die drei gerechten Kammacher* and *Der Schmied seines Glückes* are essentially humorous Novellen—*Die Kammacher* a farce, *Der Schmied seines Glückes* a satirical comedy. Hardly any whole Novelle of Storm is purely humorous, though humorous characters and situations occur in various works. But whereas Storm's humour is always sentimental, Keller's humour never is, but astringent and frequently satirical. It ranges over a great wealth of expression: it can be crudely domestic, as in *Die drei gerechten Kammacher*, ironic in *Der Schmied seines Glückes*, graceful in *Der Landvogt von Greifensee*, subtle and playful as in *Das Tanzlegendchen*.

But there is hardly a Novelle, except the tragic ones, in which it does not appear. In which connection it may be pointed out that whereas the bulk of Storm's stories are unhappy in their endings, with Keller there are only two tragic stories, *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* and *Regina*. Poetic Realism of course does not exclude tragedy; but with its insistence upon the goodness of life, the 'dies-seitige' value of real and material things, it tends to avoid the appearance of tragedy. And it is only to be expected that Keller who represents most fully and definitely the positive, 'lebensbejahende' aspect of this view of life should in his works give a picture of life which is rather optimistic than tragic. The feeling that pervades everything that Keller wrote is that life is good in all its manifestations, not the least in the beauty which exists in material things by the very fact of their existence. Where Stifter sees them all under the aspect of eternity and prizes them for their enduring qualities, their subjection to eternal laws, where Storm sees and prizes them for their transitoriness, finding an added beauty in them that they are all subject to decay, Keller sees and prizes them for their mere being and the wealth of poetry which is inherent in them as such.

In Gottfried Keller's works the German Novelle reaches a maximum, beyond which no development is possible, except in the development of some individual and one-sided tendency at the expense of totality and comprehensiveness. What distinguishes the Novellen of Keller from the classical prototypes of the Novelle is not so much that they are different in form, but that the severe outlines of the original form have been considerably filled out—the slim figure of the maiden has acquired the opu-

lent contours of the matron. 'To load every rift with ore' was the aim of Keats in writing poetry, and that is the achievement of Keller as a writer of Novellen. The austere line of the original form has given place to a richly coloured and detailed painting. The subject matter of some of the stories might be equally well treated by Boccaccio: *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* for instance, or *Der Schmied seines Glückes*—one can easily imagine what mischievous delight Boccaccio would have taken in the telling of the latter—but what Boccaccio would have told in five or ten pages Keller tells in fifty or a hundred, and the additional pages are filled with that detailed and localized account of reality, which is one of the most precious elements in Keller's art—but one which the theorists of the Novelle regard as lying outside its scope. Once again the main interest of the Novelle rests upon the event itself and its effect upon the person whom it befalls; though the interest is increased by the description of the attendant circumstances, the event is not submerged by it as it is in Stifter. As with Goethe there is an ethical element in addition to the purely 'incidental' element: and this takes the form of paedagogic intention. In most German Novellen the centre of gravity is shifted from the incident to some more internal interest: in the best of Keller's Novellen, though this internal interest is present, the stress is fairly distributed between event, material surroundings and the inner interest, which can generally be described as education of personality.

Chapter VIII

THE NOVELLE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR TRAGEDY

In the account of Otto Ludwig, mention was made of his unremitting but unavailing effort to master the form of the drama and to write a poetical tragedy which would bear comparison with those of Shakespeare. Theodor Storm, though without the ambition of Ludwig to be dramatist as well as Novellist, was concerned to vindicate for the *Novelle* by means of his own writings the power to arouse tragic emotion. With both poets the effort was unsuccessful; and their lack of success was due not only to reasons of personal temperament, which unfitted them for the creation of tragedy, but also to the general tendency of an age whose spiritual atmosphere was alien to tragedy: *bürgerlich* as opposed to heroic. It is, however, important to note that, in spite of the fundamentally optimistic attitude to life of the writers of Poetic Realism in general, Germany was passing all the time through a period of pessimism, which found expression in the extreme popularity of the philosophy of Schopenhauer from the middle of the century onward.

This pessimism was the natural result of political disappointment and disillusion. In spite of the increasing importance of the *Bürgertum* in public affairs and its growing self-confidence in its position as a solid element in the state, the failure of the essentially *bürgerliche* Revolution of 1848 was felt as a tremendous set-back to the political aspirations of the patriots of the 'forties.

Rudolf Haym, in a speech at Halle in 1857, sums up the prevalent feeling in the words: 'Wir standen und wir stehen in dem Gefühl einer grossen Enttäuschung'.¹

Even in the writers of Poetic Realism a pessimistic as well as an optimistic strain makes itself heard, and if with Gottfried Keller the optimistic prevails, it is equally true to say that Theodor Storm's reaction to life was on the whole a pessimistic one. Indeed it may quite reasonably be argued that the surrender to the world of material things which characterizes the movement is in essence a *défaitisme* of the spirit whose aspirations to high endeavour had been thwarted. Certainly with Theodor Storm the loving attachment to material things is a form of protection set up against the insecurity of the universe. And as Romanticism has been described as 'ein Flüchten aus der Wirklichkeit', so Poetic Realism might be described as 'ein Flüchten in die Wirklichkeit'—out of the world of metaphysical insecurity. But the consciousness of disillusion and the uneasy sense of the tragic nature of the universe, in so far as they caused the generation of 1850 to withdraw into the relative security of a bürgerliche world, with its apparently so firmly established order and its reassuring solidity, do not beget that heroic attitude to life which is the basis of real tragedy; and the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany produced no great tragic writer with the exception of Friedrich Hebbel, whose origins lie further back in the Jung-Deutschland movement.

That even a specifically bürgerliche world was not able to exclude entirely the sense of the tragic aspects of life goes without saying, and is amply vouched for in the works of Poetic Realism by such a monumental testimony

as Stifter's *Novelle Abdias*, and in a more elegiac strain by numerous stories of Theodor Storm. Its problem was to find a form of tragedy which was in keeping with its own particular *Lebensform* and attitude to life.

Schopenhauer in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (Book 4, Para. 51) differentiates between three types of tragedy: that in which the catastrophe is brought about by fate, that in which it is brought about by a villain whose will is directed towards evil, and thirdly that in which the tragic situation arises from the force of circumstances, from the fact that certain characters are by their nature such that, without ill-will on their part and without qualities which make of them exceptional personalities, they must necessarily, when brought into contact, cause one another the greatest unhappiness.² The question whether this third type actually is capable of arousing the specifically tragic emotion may be left out of account for the moment. The point is, that it is by its very nature more in keeping with the world of *Bürgertum* than either of the other types; and it is significant that, whereas Schopenhauer could cite a play of Sophocles and plays of Shakespeare as examples of the first two types, he has to have recourse to a modern work, namely Goethe's *Clavigo*, to provide him with an example of his third type of tragedy—a work which has a *bürgerliche* setting and one of which the protagonists are *Bürger*. Both the former types—the tragedy of fate and of villainy—belong to the realm of heroic tragedy. The last fate-tragedy was Schiller's *Braut von Messina*, itself a resuscitation of an outworn form, for the later fate-tragedies of Werner, Müllner and Houwald merely employed a debased conception of fate as a theatrical trick; the last full-blooded

villain in German dramatic literature was Franz Moor in Schiller's *Räuber*. The Novelle, as has been pointed out, is concerned with chance rather than with fate, though it has to show the fateful effect of chance in the form of the event upon the characters which it presents. Further it is noticeable that the villain as such finds no place in it.³

The eighteenth century saw the emergence of a new form of drama, 'das bürgerliche Drama', not identical with Schopenhauer's third type of tragedy but having many points of contact with it, and this form of drama, which had divested itself of the heroic, was the characteristic form for the Aufklärung which, like the period of Poetic Realism a hundred years later, was a period of materialistic and bürgerliche culture. Characteristic for the bürgerliche Trauerspiel is the tendency to substitute for the more astringent emotions evoked by heroic tragedy the sentimental emotions of pity and forgiveness; as in the conclusion of Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson*, for instance; and for the figure of the hero struggling against fate, characters of everyday format enmeshed in the net of contemporary circumstance. In the course of time, as its technique becomes more masterly, it is also able to dispense with the villain.

After reaching one high point of achievement in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (1785), the bürgerliche Trauerspiel found no first-rate exponent until it was revived by Friedrich Hebbel temporarily in the middle of the 'forties of the nineteenth century in one outstanding work, *Maria Magdalena*. (The bürgerlichen Trauerspiele of Karl Gutzkow which appeared during the same decade are deservedly forgotten as works of very inferior poetical

merit.) Hebbel himself occupies an anomalous position. Though his works furnish some of the most outstanding examples of Schopenhauer's third type of tragedy, they are so overlaid with 'kulturhistorische' significance, present characters on so monumental a scale, that they appear to belong to heroic tragedy; and it is Hebbel who definitely rejects the villain as being incompatible with tragedy at its best. At the same time Hebbel is anything but a poet of Bürgertum, and his bürgerliches Trauerspiel is only fortuitously one: an application of his 'kulturhistorische' ideas to the bürgerliche world of his day instead of to the historic and grandiose past. With Hebbel, Schopenhauer's third type of tragedy and the bürgerliche Trauerspiel do not coincide but fall apart. (His Novellen, which belong mainly to an earlier period, are the least important part of his works, and reveal a complete lack of talent for the art of the story-teller. *Die Kuh* (1849) is a *reductio ad absurdum* of his theory of the necessity of strict causality. *Matteo* (1839) may be described as a masterpiece of ethical bad taste. The absence of freedom of movement which Hebbel's preconceived philosophical framework tended to produce in his dramas is equally apparent in his Novellen. Hebbel wrote of Kleist's Novellen, that they were 'rigid with life'; his own Novellen are rigid, not with life, but as is more usual, with the lack of it.)

After Hebbel, the bürgerliche Trauerspiel languished again in German literature, at least as far as first-rate works were concerned, until the 1890's, when it was revived anew by Gerhart Hauptmann. It is noticeable that whereas the Aufklärung—a specifically bürgerliche age—developed its own type of tragedy, an inferior one

indeed, the parallel age of Bürgertum in the nineteenth century made no use of the type of tragedy which its predecessor had placed at its disposal. Precisely during the years in which Poetic Realism was at its height there was no tragedy. An explanation lies to hand. The Bürgertum of the eighteenth century was in a period of becoming, was militant in the conquest of its position in the state, and its drama was militant also, i.e. *Emilia Galotti* and *Kabale und Liebe*. The basic content of these tragedies, the conflict between the Bürgertum and the nobility, could not be utilized by the Bürgertum of the second half of the nineteenth century, which had, to a certain extent at least, acquired its position within the state. Nor was the time yet ripe for the content which Hebbel proposes in *Maria Magdalena*—a conflict engendered of self-criticism. As has been suggested the bürgerliche view of life was for the generation in the middle of the century in Germany a refuge; the advantages of its seeming solidity and protectiveness were more apparent than its shortcomings. It is not until the end of the period, with its approaching dissolution under the attacks of industrialism and internationalism, that self-criticism begins in the later works of Gottfried Keller—*Das verlorene Lachen* and *Martin Salander*.

The question whether the Novelle as a genre is capable of arousing the tragic emotion, answered in modern times in the negative by Bernard Bruch,⁴ in the affirmative by Hermann Pongs,⁵ is a question which should not be asked and cannot be answered until the preliminary question has been decided: in what does the specific quality of the Tragic consist? Attention has been drawn earlier in the chapter to the three types of tragedy postulated by

Schopenhauer, of which the third, the tragedy of ordinary circumstance, appears to belong more specifically to modern times. It was laid down by Aristotle that the emotions which tragedy must evoke are pity and fear; and later writers, as for instance, Corneille, have regarded admiration as a possible ingredient as well. One thing is certain, that the emotion which the earlier writers of tragedy aroused was, in spite of the softer element of pity which finds a legitimate place in it, on the whole a sterner, more tonic one. It is Lessing, the typical Aufklärer, whose whole argument with regard to tragedy, in his correspondence with Mendelssohn and Nicolai as well as in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, tends to make pity the specifically tragic emotion.⁶ Yet though pity may be evoked by the spectacle of the hero struggling against destiny, it is rather an exaltation of spirit akin to admiration which his unavailing struggle evokes; and the idea of forgiveness can necessarily find no place either in the tragedy of fate or in the tragedy of villainy. However these, the more sentimental emotions, are the ones which not only Schopenhauer's third type of tragedy but also the bürgerliche Trauerspiel itself arouses. The attitude of mind which makes them possible may be described as 'understanding'—*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. It is precisely this attitude of mind which the writer of Novellen aims consciously or unconsciously at producing.

Schopenhauer, though a confirmed enemy of the bürgerliche Trauerspiel as a genre, tends, in his whole philosophy and in particular in his interpretation of tragedy, to support the validity of his third type of tragedy by the stress which he lays upon suffering rather than upon conflict; and this general attitude of his makes him the spokesman

of the whole generation in the middle of the century, a generation suffering under the disillusionment of great ideals unrealized and defeated, and accounts for the extreme popularity of his philosophy from the 'forties onward.

It has been shown why the bürgerliche Trauerspiel, which would appear to be the most suitable form in which Poetic Realism could express its sense of the tragic aspects of life, could not be utilized by the bürgerliche generation of the middle of the century. But these tragic aspects could not be entirely repressed, as the efforts of Otto Ludwig to write tragedies and the attempts of Theodor Storm to develop the tragic possibilities of the Novelle testify. And it was precisely in the Novelle, in spite of the prevailing optimism in the works of Stifter and Keller, that the generation found a vessel for the expression of its particular sense of the 'Gebrechlichkeit der Welt', to use a phrase of Kleist's, stressing rather the suffering inherent in the fate of human beings, in their relations to one another, than the conflict between man and fate, and evoking rather the sentimental reactions of pity, forgiveness and above all 'understanding', than the specifically tragic exaltation of spirit. The Novelle is the sentimental substitute for tragic drama during the period of Poetic Realism.

This aspect of the Novelle is most apparent in the works of Theodor Storm who, more than any other writer of the period, is concerned with subjects which are in his opinion tragic. It is noticeable that with the exception of *Der Schimmelreiter*, his last Novelle, in which the hero is presented in conflict with nature, all the Novellen with unhappy endings deal with characters whose mis-

fortunes are due to failure to understand each other (*Hans und Heinz Kirch*), and who suffer under the force of adverse circumstances without setting up an adequate resistance to them (*Der Herr Etatsrat*). Similarly, in the two Novellen of Gottfried Keller with unhappy endings, *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* and *Regina*, the protagonists, unable to cope with the force of circumstance, seek refuge in suicide. And it may be observed that when a tragic dramatist arises in Germany at the end of the century in the person of Gerhart Hauptmann, he makes suicide the *dénouement* for characters who are lacking in the power of resistance to a hostile fate (*Vor Sonnenaufgang* and *Einsame Menschen*). The aim of the writer of Novellen such as Storm, to arouse the emotions of pity and forgiveness as the expression of an attitude of mind which involves 'understanding' of the characters presented, leads necessarily to a closer investigation of the psychology of those characters, and so prepares the way for the psychological Novelle of the end of the century, which in its insistence upon detailed traits of character, blurs the sharp outline of the form, shifting the stress from the outstanding single event to the description of the person or persons whom it befalls.

Apart from Theodor Storm, three other writers may be here mentioned, who in the second half of the century made use of the form of the Novelle for subject matter of tragic content, all of them however robuster in their sentiment than Storm: Friedrich Halm, Theodor Fontane and Wilhelm Raabe.

Friedrich Halm, who attained considerable popularity as a dramatist during his life-time, was the author of three Novellen of first-rate quality, which did not become

generally known until after his death in 1870, though one of them, *Die Marzipanliese*, had already appeared in 1856 in Gutzkow's journal, *Unterhaltungen am häuslichen Herd*. Halm is clearly influenced very strongly by Kleist in his style, though the compact prose of Kleist is loosened, in his subject matter and in the uncompromising carrying through of the central idea. In *Die Freundinnen* (1860) which has certain affinities in subject matter with *Die Marquise von O.* and relates a similar instance of 'confusion of feelings', the tragic situation is solved in a conciliatory manner, characteristically for the trend of tragedy at the time, by understanding and forgiveness.⁷ *Die Marzipanliese* relates the retribution which overtakes a criminal in the pursuance of his efforts to secure a fortune. Even more Kleistian in its presentment of a character who is dominated by a single idea is the Novelle *Das Haus an der Veronabrücke* (written between 1862 and 1864). The hero Ruggiero is, in the unshakeable force of his will at least, a pendant to Michael Kohlhaas, and the Novelle would no doubt have long since taken its place among the masterpieces of the nineteenth century were it not that the action of the hero offends the moral sense so greatly as to destroy the aesthetic pleasure in the artistry with which it is described. (An elderly husband attempts to force his wife into adultery in order to obtain an heir.) For this reason Paul Heyse excludes it from his *Novellenschatz*.⁸

Like Halm, Theodor Fontane wrote three Novellen,⁹ *Grete Minde* (1880), *Ellernklipp* (1881), and *Unterm Birnbaum* (1885), all three of them dealing with tragic subject matter. In the sombre atmosphere which surrounds them all they stand apart from the bulk of his

novels which, though they are often unhappy in their conclusions, move in a world of social relationships in which sinister undercurrents are not permitted to rise to the surface. Only the incident of the Chinaman in *Effi Breist* approximates in feeling to the prevailing Stimmung of the Novellen. *Unterm Birnbaum* is perhaps essentially only a Kriminalgeschichte: a crime concealed, suspected, brought finally to light and expiated, but the interest lies mainly in the actions and psychology of the criminal, whose peace of mind is disturbed more by fear of detection than by remorse for his deed. In *Ellernklipp* a father murders his son in order that he may marry the girl with whom his son is in love, but ultimately commits suicide on the spot where the murder had been committed. As with the principal character in *Unterm Birnbaum*, however, the suicide of Balzer in *Ellernklipp* is not an ethical act of expiation, but rather the result of nerve strain. The finest of the three Novellen is undoubtedly *Grete Minde*, based upon a chronicle of the town of Tangermünde, which relates the action of a girl in the sixteenth century, who set the town on fire because her paternal heritage was withheld from her by the town council. The Novelle has a certain balladesque character, with reminiscences of old folk-song motifs. It is clear that Fontane worked backwards from the final situation as given in the chronicle and was mainly interested in motivating it in the psychology and earlier history of the heroine.

A writer of deeper emotional significance is Wilhelm Raabe, whose fame as a writer of novels is mainly attached to works which do not represent his art at its maturest and best. Such works as *Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse* (1856) and *Der Hungerpastor* (1864), whilst

already revealing the salient qualities of his mind, have about them too much of the sentimental predilections of the age in which they were written to enable them to claim the unqualified appreciation which his later works deserve. The attitude of mind which he consistently reveals is, in spite of a fundamentally pessimistic strain, far more heroic in temper than that of Storm; and though he is painfully aware of the misery and suffering of human existence, his works glorify the spirit in man which is able to pass beyond it. During his long life—he was born in 1832 and died in 1911—he wrote, in addition to a large number of full-length novels, a series of Novellen of outstanding excellence.

Although the subject matter of some of these Novellen is taken from contemporary life—*Wer kann es wenden?* (1862) for instance, which perhaps from a formal point of view can hardly be described as a Novelle—in his best works Raabe draws his incidents and characters from the historical past of Germany, using the historical element with a sureness of touch and an exact sense of the relationship between historical event and setting and the fate of the individual whose fortunes are involved, which distinguishes his stories on the one hand from the Chronicle Novellen of Storm, in which the fate of the private individual is merely projected into the past, and on the other hand from the Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen of Riehl, where the experiences of the individual are merely an illustration of the given cultural background. Like Storm he adopts a slightly archaizing style.

Among the best of his Novellen may be mentioned *Else von der Tanne* (1869), a story whose action is set in the years of desolation following the Thirty Years' War.

Its theme is that of the innocent girl suspected of witchcraft—a similar subject is treated in Storm's *Renate*—and destroyed by the savage cruelty of the superstitious mob. The impression which it creates is unusually pessimistic for Raabe, who does not incline in his works as a whole to leave his characters shattered by the calamities which befall them. Nor is this the final impression in *Der Junker von Denow* (1862), in which the hero atones for his participation in a mutiny, which besmirches his knightly honour, by self-imposed death. Greatest of all his *Novellen*, with at least an approximation to genuine tragic effect, is *Des Reiches Krone* (1870), a story of Nuremberg in the fifteenth century, showing the utmost depths of human suffering irradiated by the triumphant greatness of soul of hero and heroine alike. The final scene in which the imperial crown is brought back to Nuremberg and the heroine Mechthild recognizes her lover, who has spent his strength in winning it and now returns a leper, is unsurpassed in its high-hearted beauty.

Des Reiches Krone, in which fate is conquered by human courage and love, Stifter's *Abdias*, the history of a dogged but unavailing struggle against a malevolent fate, and Storm's *Der Schimmelreiter*, the story of a struggle between man's will and the blind forces of nature, are the three works in which the pathos of the *Novelle* approaches most nearly to the emotion aroused by heroic tragedy.

Chapter IX

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVELLE

(a) PAUL HEYSE

Compared with Keller and Storm, Paul Heyse, who was their friend as well as their contemporary, is the aesthete of the *Novelle* as well as its mass-producer. In the course of sixty years devoted to the writing of *Novellen*—from 1850 until 1914—Heyse published about twenty-four volumes of *Novellen* alone, apart from an equal mass of dramas, lyrics and translations. But for those who wish to obtain an idea of Heyse's achievements in this genre the selected edition in three volumes is to be recommended in preference to the twenty-four volumes.¹

The subject matter of these *Novellen* varies very much: there are *Italienische Novellen*, *Meraner Novellen*, *Troubadour Novellen*, *Dorfnovellen* and a majority dealing with the society of his day. The prevailing types, however, are those dealing with Italy or the Mediterranean generally, which is tantamount to saying, for Heyse, dealing with the 'land of beauty'; and the *Novellen* which treat psychological problems in modern society. Heyse was amongst other things a student of romance culture and literature in a dilettante fashion, and his *Troubadour Novellen* are monuments of his learning rather than of poetical imagination.

Aesthete and mass-producer—the two apparently contradictory terms and ideas—elucidate Heyse's position as a writer of *Novellen* and suggest at once the weakness and unsatisfactory nature of that position. During his

life-time, at least during the later years of the last century, he was named side by side with Keller, Storm and C. F. Meyer. The poets corresponded one with another on subjects of literature as writers of equal standing. Modern criticism has sorted them out a little and given Heyse a less important place than the others. In effect he is very little read nowadays. Ermatinger writes of him: 'His Novellen are lacking in ideas and ultimately all dead, for the basic concepts of conventional morality, which are intended to give them life, are not ideas at all'.² This severe judgment must be accepted with this reservation, that the critic is speaking here of *Ideendichtung* as such. Though Heyse's writings cannot claim to be *Ideendichtung* they contain many positive qualities which entitle them to respect and even admiration. Nevertheless the fact remains that they present a far more superficial view of life than the works of Keller, Storm or Ludwig, or indeed of any of the writers so far considered.

A letter from Keller to Theodor Storm *apropos* of a nervous breakdown of Heyse's is illuminating. Keller writes: '...joking aside, I almost believe that the fact that Heyse has been writing for nearly thirty years, without having for a single year enjoyed distraction and variety by means of official duties, teaching or some other form of workaday activity, is now revenging itself'.³ Keller was for many years municipal secretary to the town of Zurich; Storm was all his life a magistrate, Mörike a country parson and schoolmaster, Stifter a civil servant. All of these writers were anchored through their civil occupations in the *Bürgertum* and were conscious of responsibilities to it. Paul Heyse was a man of independent means, greatly favoured by nature and circum-

stance, able to devote himself entirely to the cultivation of literature; and though he certainly was profoundly aware of his responsibilities to his art, so much so indeed that it may be said that the whole mass of his literary production—Novellen, dramas and lyrics—was an offering made by a devout votary on the altar of Beauty,⁴ yet, in respect of life he was, compared with Keller, Storm and Mörike, irresponsible. That is to say, he was not rooted in certain social forms of life in the same way as the others were, but was able to float arbitrarily on its surface. Stifter, Keller and Storm were representatives of a definite Bürgertum which existed in Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century, representatives of it because their whole existence was conditioned by it. Heyse stands outside of that Bürgertum and is the representative of no social form, because he is tied to none by circumstances, but is at liberty to move where he will. He is the representative of the individual floating on the surface of society and able to sever his connection with it whenever he will, since that connection is not an essential one.

But Heyse came to be during his life-time the specialist and authority on the Novelle; and though the present generation may find less solid value in his works than in those of his greater contemporaries, yet he did some service to the genre as such in his insistence upon the observation of the form, and in his investigation of all possibilities of the genre. He enunciated the most popularly accepted theory of the Novelle—in his 'Falkentheorie'; he made a very admirable and useful collection of representative German Novellen which he published together with Hermann Kurz from 1871 onwards—a

second collection with Ludwig Laistner was published between 1884 and 1888. To this collection—*Deutscher Novellenschatz*—he prefixed an essay on the Novelle, and each individual Novelle he supplied with a short critical introduction. His critical writings on the subject as well as his actual practice are concerned with the working out of the essential form of the Novelle; and in his *Jugenderinnerungen und Bekenntnisse* he gives interesting accounts of his artistic procedure. In the chapter 'Aus der Werkstatt' one can read with what conscientious care he approaches a subject, amplifies it, remodels it, motivates or suppresses until the subject is made to yield its maximum of effectiveness. One can see that hardly Otto Ludwig himself has considered the technique more carefully or brought it to a higher point of perfection as far as its effectiveness is concerned. No doubt this insistence upon the excellence of form, considered in its more external aspect of technique, is a very useful and important function on the part of a poet, and may prove invaluable in arresting a tendency in literature towards careless, slipshod composition. As a further example of this in German literature the severe formality of Platen's poetry may be instanced, setting itself up as a sort of protest against the later Romantic lyric poets whose sense of form had been entirely destroyed by their imitation of the Volkslied. Yet with Heyse, at any rate, it is purely an external matter, and the word 'effectiveness' stands with him in contrast to the word 'profundity'; his meticulous and praiseworthy skill in using his subject matter to the best possible advantage can achieve almost anything except inform that subject matter with an idea-significance, which by his very nature he is unable to give it.

As it is significant for Storm that his characteristic form is the *Erinnerungsnovelle*, so it is significant for Heyse that his characteristic form is what may be called the 'Bekanntschafsnovelle'—the term is something in the nature of unfavourable criticism. Hans Bracher in his work on the *Rahmenerzählung und Verwandtes bei Keller, Meyer, Storm* gives the following schema for Heyse's methods: 'He meets someone at the *table d'hôte*, in an hotel, on a journey who attracts his attention by some peculiarity. Heyse observes him silently and finds something enigmatical about him, makes his acquaintance, whereupon the person in question relates the story of his or her life'. And he sums up the method in the phrase: 'An hotel is the ideal place for the technique of the *Bekanntschafsnovelle*. Heyse can't manage without it'.⁵ Heyse's attitude to the stories he tells is clearly much more irresponsible than that of Storm or Keller, much more arbitrarily individual. (Later on in the works of Thomas Mann the position of the poet who has no responsibilities to bürgerliche society becomes in itself the problem for which he strives to find a solution.) In the framework stories of Storm and Keller, the connection between story-teller and the lives of the people whose stories are told is much more intimate and ethically responsible. With Heyse the connection is substantially mere curiosity. With all the skill which Heyse unfolds in the story itself, there is a lack of ethical motive for the telling of the story and the reader is frequently surprised to find that the principal character reveals the most secret affairs of his or her life to a person utterly unknown, whom he or she happens to meet in an hotel.

Heyse's first published *Novelle*, *L'Arrabbiata* (1852),

has for its setting the Bay of Sorrento, and one may say that this type of natural beauty remains characteristic not only for his landscape but for his ideal of beauty altogether. *L'Arrabbiata* was for years cited as the most perfect specimen of the Novelle in European literature—an exaggerated estimate of it, certainly, though as far as the technique is concerned it reveals all the excellence and the essential qualities which Heyse in his later theoretical writings demands: it is a single incident isolated from the background, and having the strong-marked silhouette which impresses it upon the memory. Lauretta, a young fisher maiden of Sorrento, is known as *L'Arrabbiata* because she will tolerate no love-making from the young men but repulses their advances with violence. Tonino, a young ferryman who is in love with her, rows her across to Capri as part of his normal duties; on the way back in the evening he attempts to embrace her. She bites his hand savagely, and during the respite thus obtained jumps overboard. Tonino, overcome with remorse, fishes her out and rows her back to Sorrento without any further incident or even exchange of conversation with her. In the evening Lauretta comes of her own free will to Tonino's hut and binds up his hand and, so we are led to infer, his heart also.

It is in effect a very charming little idyll, without any very great depth or significance to it, such as there is consisting in the drawing of the fierce, untamed Lauretta, whose heart determines both in repulsion and surrender her course of action. And this type of woman reappears again and again in Heyse's stories—indeed his Novellen are nearly all about women.

Heyse has written several volumes of *Italienische*

Novellen, and in all of them Italy is conceived of under the aspect of the 'land of art and beauty'—with Heyse it is always the oleograph Italy. There he is at home. The landscape contains shining sea, cypresses, marble villas, olive trees, dark-eyed maidens, the complete romantic *mise en scène*. Among Heyse's Novellen dealing with Italian subjects the following may be mentioned as being particularly good: *Das Mädchen von Treppi* (1858) (Heyse describes in his *Jugenderinnerungen* the changes which the original anecdote underwent before it could be adapted to the Novellen form), *Die Stickerin von Treviso* (1868) and *Nerina* (1875), which deals with the sufferings of the Italian poet Leopardi. It will be observed that in all four Novellen the title refers to a heroine, who is the centre of interest.

But these Italian Novellen represent only one type; there are a great number, indeed the majority, which deal with the society of Heyse's own time. In these, as indeed in the Italian Novellen, the interest is nearly always in the psychology of some given person, and a great parade is made of the psychological problem as such. As examples of this type two of the better-known works, *Zwei Gefangene* (1876) and *Himmlische und irdische Liebe* (1885), may be cited. It will astonish modern readers to know that in his own day Heyse was regarded as an extremely immoral writer, who upheld in his Novellen a code of morality which was subversive of the accepted one. Thus in 1888 a work appeared, *Paul Heyses Novellen und Romane*, which was in effect 'ein Widerspruch gegen die unsittlichen Dichtungen Heyses'.⁶ The author of this work in another place writes as follows:

Only a poet like Heyse can make the impossible possible.

With him people divulge the secrets of their hearts to total strangers: so called decent young girls discuss indecent subjects; to marry a widow is immoral and to love the wife of another is moral; faithfulness is a vice, death is for healthy people, who normally prefer to remain alive; a consummation devoutly to be wished; the ten commandments are not binding upon geniuses, poets, artists and exceptionally gifted women; adultery is a natural right and marriage an immoral relationship. That is Heyse's philosophy of life.⁷

All this is very much the expression of its particular period. It was written in 1888. But taken in connection with the judgment of Ermatinger already quoted, it is indicative of the change in the attitude to Heyse which has taken place since his life-time. Quite apart from the technical element of effectiveness which in itself secures a certain amount of popularity, it is clear that Heyse was popular in his day because he was in the bad sense 'modern'—up-to-date. He brought the latest daring attacks and rebellions against the accepted conventions of society. But in his attitude there was nothing profoundly ethical: he was not a moralist, like Nietzsche, shaking at the ethical foundations of his generation; he was merely a frondeur tilting at the social conventions of his generation. Akin to him is all that specious Problem Literature of the 'nineties and the beginning of this century, which found indeed its most popular expression in the drama of France and Germany and England and is now forgotten, because, like Heyse, it dealt with problems which were not fundamental ones at all, but only the outcome of the special conditions of the time.

Heyse's Novellen make on the whole pleasant reading. In addition to those already mentioned, the following

would seem to reveal his art at its best: *Andrea Delfin* (1859), a moving story of Venice in the eighteenth century but with the ending *manqué*; *Der verlorene Sohn* (1869), a valiant attempt to achieve a really tragic situation; *Geoffroy und Garcinde* (1871), a Troubadour Novelle; *Der letzte Centaur* (1870), a characteristic presentation in fantastic and ironic form of the conflict between modern civilization and ancient naturalness. It is significant that most of the Novellen that can be read with pleasure to-day are those which deal with more exotic subject matter than the social conditions of Heyse's own time. Heyse tells often a good story and is technically free from faults. His form, like his style, like his tone, is polished, easy, 'weltnüchtern'. He writes an excellent German prose, but that, like everything about him, is lacking in those characteristic qualities which distinguish the greatest writers.

If it be asked what Heyse contributed to the development of the German Novelle, it must be admitted that his contribution in so far as it brings something new is rather to be deplored than welcomed. His positive merit lies in his reminder of the form, regarded as technique; the value of a careful examination and working out of the possibilities of the genre Novelle as such with a view to obtaining the maximum of effectiveness. But with regard to the content he sets the Novelle off upon a false track in laying the stress upon supposed individual psychological problems, which have ceased to be problems to-day. In all his numerous Novellen he contributes hardly anything which is really original and fruitful. *L'Arrabbiata* remains even to-day his most famous Novelle; but to place it, as a former generation did, on the same level of excel-

lence as *Der arme Spielmann* or *Die Judenbuche* or *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* is to betray a complete lack of sense of values in literature.⁸

(b) CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

If Heyse may be described as the aesthete and mass-producer of the Novelle, the Swiss poet Conrad Ferdinand Meyer is the aesthete and virtuoso. Meyer, like Heyse, lacks that rootedness in the bürgerliche life of his time—though in a different way. He is an observer of life rather than a partaker in it. This attitude to life in both poets gives to their work something of the exotic, something which is remarkable by its variance from the normal type—in the scientific sense the quality of a freak product. Both poets, standing outside the Bürgertum, within the limits of which Keller, Storm and Stifter found inspiration and security, are representatives of that aesthetic individualism of the end of the nineteenth century which was the outcome of the liberal conception of the individual in his relation to society, and led to the dissolution of the Bürgertum of which it was itself the outcome; just as in the realm of economic life the principle of liberalism led to the dissolution of the Bürgertum in the emergence of socialism.

In Meyer's Novellen the dissimilarity to the prevalent type, the uniqueness, is more apparent than in the Novellen of Heyse, for the very good reason that Meyer possesses as a poet a personality much more marked and original than that of Heyse. One thing may be observed with regard to Meyer. He tends in so far to return to the classical type of Novelle, in contrast to the type which had

become characteristic for the writers of Poetic Realism, in that he shifts the social plane of his characters up into the bürgerlich-aristocratic world instead of keeping to the 'kleinbürgerliche' world which was the special province of Keller. The same thing may be observed of Paul Heyse, the characters of whose Novellen except in his occasional excursions into stories of peasant life, are inhabitants of the world of education and culture. It is permissible to find in the two types of Novelle—the Romance and the Germanic—a difference which is inherent in the spirit of the Mediterranean and of the Northern peoples; and to see precisely in Keller and Meyer, the two writers of the neutral territory of Switzerland, the representatives of the two cultures: the Germanic bürgerliche and the Romance aristocratic culture. Living in the same town as Meyer, Keller is directed towards German ideals in literature. Meyer, in spite of the fact that he writes in German (his correspondence is mostly in French), is directed towards Romance ideals in literature.

A further contrast may be observed between Keller and Meyer: Keller can make use of everyday mediocre subject matter because of his strength; Meyer must use incidents which contain the big historical gesture because of his weakness. Keller, secure in his rootedness in Bürgertum, need not assert himself with an impressive gesture; Meyer, floating in his Ästhetentum, must conceal his weakness and insecurity behind the heroic pose, the flamboyant setting. The two writers are exact antitheses: Keller is 'lebensbejahend'; Meyer is 'lebensfürchtend'. Keller writes out of his wholehearted acceptance of life in every form, whether it reveals itself to him as history or breaks upon him as contemporary event; Meyer writes

out of his fear of actual life, his inability and conscious inability to deal with it, and lives only vicariously in the characters of grand format which he sets upon his stage. Meyer writes: 'The mediocre saddens me because it coincides with something analogous in myself; therefore I desire the grandiose so intensely'. Keller neither feared 'the mediocre', nor was he aware of it within himself, and if he had been he would have been unconcerned about it. Meyer takes refuge in the past because he is afraid of reality, i.e. the present. As he himself says: 'the past gives me a feeling of peculiar calm and greatness'. In one important respect therefore his works differ from the classical *Novellen* much more than those of Keller do: his subject matter is never taken from contemporary life, is never gossip raised to the level of literature—as Keller's subject matter often is, and as that of the original type of *Novelle* usually was. It is always taken from the historical past, and places important historical characters upon the stage.

All this is so closely connected with the personality of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer as a human being, that it becomes necessary briefly to say something of his personal history. The son of very cultivated parents, he was an example of that lack of vitality which often accompanies an over-refinement: a similar case is that of the *Novellist*, Eduard von Keyserling. From his boyhood Meyer revealed a timidity in the face of life which was unquestionably pathological, and developed in course of time to such an extent that he spent some time in a mental home. The whole of his poetic activity as a writer of *Novellen* lies between the years 1870 and 1890, after which year he succumbed again to mental disorder. Timidity in the face

of life is the key to his poetic activity, as it is with Grillparzer; as it is in a certain sense with Platen. Both Meyer and Grillparzer seek refuge from life in the vicarious life of their art, but in a different way. Grillparzer disguises his weakness under the form of some superior quality; Meyer leaves it as weakness but sets up an heroic façade in front of it.

Like Platen, Meyer found his way to his own particular expression through contact with the art of Italy; but whereas Venice acted as the open sesame upon Platen's imagination and determined the form of his poetry, with Meyer it was the art of Rome. With both poets art overshadows life both as a source of inspiration—as the stimulus to write—and as the source of their subject matter. Both of them give a rarefied form of life—a stylization of it, in the sense that the life they represent is not seen at first hand but already moulded by art, pre-eminently by the plastic arts. Thus Meyer's Novellen are full of reminiscences of paintings or sculptures, and he frequently has recourse to the description of an imaginary picture in order to present a psychological situation, to symbolize an event.

Meyer wrote in all eleven Novellen—if *Jürg Jenatsch* be included as a Novelle, though it may perhaps more correctly be classed as a novel. The subject matter of all of them is taken from the historic past—they are historical in a sense in which Storm's Chroniknovellen are not historical, in so far as they deal actually with characters who are known to history, or with situations which are illuminating for Kulturgeschichte. Further the subject matter is predominantly taken from the period of the Renaissance, if the term be stretched so as to include that

whole period in European history in which the individual is beginning to assert himself and rebel against the constraint imposed by church or tradition or state. Of the eleven Novellen the one which deals with the earliest historical period is *Die Richterin* (1885), in which the scene is laid partly in Rome, partly in the Rhaetian Alps at the time of Charlemagne, who himself appears as the *deus ex machina*. The latest period which Meyer presents is the eighteenth century in *Der Schuss von der Kanzel* (1878), the weakest of his stories, in which he presents an 'original' who is somewhat akin to Salomon Landolt in Keller's *Landvogt von Greifensee*. In between these two extreme dates lie *Der Heilige* (1880), which deals with the conflict between our English King Henry II and Thomas à Becket; four Novellen treat of the Italian Renaissance in the strictest sense: *Plautus im Nonnenkloster* (1882), of which the narrator is the Italian humanist Poggio; *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs* (1884); *Die Versuchung des Pescara* (1887); and *Angela Borgia* (1891). *Das Amulett* (1873) has as background the French wars of religion in the sixteenth century; *Jürg Jenatsch* (1876) the history of the Grisons early in the seventeenth century; whilst *Gustav Adolfs Page* (1882) has its action in Germany during the Thirty Years' War; and *Das Leiden eines Knaben* (1883) takes place at the court of Louis XIV. With the exception of *Der Schuss von der Kanzel* there is not a single Novelle in which one of the more famous characters of history does not appear; and there is probably no single writer who has, in so restricted a range, placed so many famous people before his readers: Charlemagne; Henry II and Becket; Dante, Can Grande della Scala; Ezzelino di Romano; Cosmo de' Medici, Poggio;

Lucrezia Borgia; Vittoria Colonna; Coligny and Montaigne; Gustav Adolf and Queen Christina of Sweden; Louis XIV, Madame de Maintenon—all of them characters of unusual vitality and originality and active participation in the life of their time. And immediately the doubt arises whether any poet who was not a Shakespeare could possibly have breathed life into all these gigantic figures, so various in their ways, yet all of them so bursting with energy, with vital force. It is true that many of them appear only episodically: Dante merely as the teller of the story of the faithless monk; Can Grande della Scala as the listener to it; Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon as the listeners to a story which their court physician tells them to beguile an autumn evening. Yet one feels that there is a certain arrogance on the part of a poet who undertakes to present so large a number of the world's greatest personalities in work of so small a compass.

Two things come up for discussion here in the choice of Meyer's characters. First the difference between the dramatist and the Novellen writer. It is quite true that only a superhuman poet like Shakespeare could have dramatized such varied but vital supermen; but a writer with much less creative power can use them as characters in a Novelle. The reason is that the dramatist must conceive them from within, must live them and let their actions be the outcome and expression of their inner life; but the Novellist, who is concerned in the first place with the event and not with the action, can record their gestures, their appearance, their characteristic attitude and so give an image of them seen from outside rather than from within. And if the reader ask himself in reading these Novellen whether Meyer has really penetrated into

the characters of Dante and Can Grande and Louis XIV—the answer is 'No'. They are not really there as living characters at all but as theatre 'supers', going through all the gestures associated with the characters they represent, but not living inwardly. Secondly, in spite of all this parade of supermen and superwomen, of heroes and Kraft-naturen, the characters whom Meyer really presents to us from within are all weaklings and beings whose life is moving in uncertainty and doubt and the shadow of disaster: the unstable monk in *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*; the feeble-minded youth in *Das Leiden eines Knaben*; the conscience-tortured Stemma in *Die Richterin*; the general suffering from a mortal disease in *Die Versuchung des Pescara*; Henry II and Thomas à Becket both seen from a semi-pathological point of view, both wounded in their most vulnerable feelings, in *Der Heilige*. The grand gesture, the historical setting, the heroic attitude is façade with Meyer; the threatened insecure building behind it is the reality, the real Meyer. And this gives to all Meyer's work that sense of conflicting elements, which prevents it from making the effect of an organic unity. It is fundamentally weakness masquerading as strength: uncertainty and insecurity disguised by the bold gesture. Form and subject matter are nearly always in conflict, except perhaps in the one Novelle, *Das Leiden eines Knaben*.

The duality in Meyer's personality comes out in many ways; even in spite of his weakness and timid withdrawal from life there is an element of strength in him. It is by sheer strength of will that he forces his way out of the darkness of mental depression into the light of day in which he can achieve something: and every single work

of his is an achievement, something wrested from the forces that threaten to submerge him. And he proposes to himself always the most difficult problems of form, as though to test his will power, his ability to the utmost: the subtle conflict between king and prelate is related by a simple-minded crossbowman. Meyer could hardly have made it more difficult for himself than by mirroring the psychological workings of the mind of Becket in the consciousness of the Swiss soldier who tells the story; and the technique of *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, with Dante himself as the story-teller, is more complicated than that of any other framework story.

The characteristic form for Meyer is that of the framework Novelle—just as for Storm it is the *Erinnerungs-novelle*; for Keller the cyclical framework story; for Heyse the *Bekanntschaftsnovelle*. Meyer himself writes: 'The tendency to use the framework is quite instinctive on my part. I like to keep the object at a distance from myself or more correctly as far as possible away from my eye'.⁹ The type of framework Novelle which Meyer uses may be defined more closely as that of the virtuoso framework, for he tends by the choice of the person who tells the story, or the situation in which it is told, to make his task as difficult as possible, so that the effect is rather that of difficulties triumphantly overcome, of a *tour de force*, the skill of which amazes though it may not necessarily delight. As an instance of this virtuosity of technique the framework Novelle *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs* may be considered in detail. The scene is the Court of Can Grande della Scala at Verona. The Duke and his courtiers are gathered round the fire when Dante, the exile, enters and asks for hospitality, which is granted him. The company

is engaged in relating instances of sudden changes of vocation with good or evil results, and Dante is bidden to contribute a story. He agrees, saying that he will develop his story from an epitaph which he read on a tombstone years before in Padua. Translated from the Latin it runs: 'Here lies the monk Astorre with his wife Antiope: Ezzelin had them buried'. Now the form of the *Novelle* is that of a narrative set in the past and seen as something completed. If therefore Dante had related his story in such a way that he said: 'I know what happened; as a matter of historical fact, it was thus and thus'; then the result would have been the normal type of framework *Novelle*. But Meyer hits upon a more ingenious method than this: all Dante knows is the fact expressed by the epitaph; he makes up the story as he goes along, so that what we are listening to is not a piece of the past completed and laid aside; but a piece of the present going on before our eyes and not yet completed. But that is not enough for Meyer: he adds to the ingenuity of the form still further; the characters in the story which Dante tells are fitted on the characters of the persons present to whom he is telling the story. He takes his listeners and makes them the actors in his drama, adapting the characters of the personages of his story to what he considers to be the characters of the persons before him. The word drama is here used deliberately, because this *Novelle* of Meyer's stands on the very frontiers between narrative and dramatic poetry, confusing and interchanging them in a way which is both paradoxical and perverse and out-doing in ingenuity anything that the Romantics did in this line. Epic poetry deals with the past; the drama creates a fictitious present. The characters in *Die Hochzeit*

des Mönchs exist both in the past and the present. The virtuosity of this method is astonishing. When the butler enters the circle of courtiers (in the framework) Dante immediately uses him as the majordomo in the story he is telling, his peculiarities of speech and gesture being transferred to his equivalent in the *Novelle*. Further, Dante acknowledges and at the same time annuls the presence of the court jester, in the framework, by obliterating him with a gesture in the *Novelle*, “‘ich streiche die Narren Ezzelins’” unterbrach sich Dante mit einer griffelhaltigen Gebärde, als schriebe er seine Fabel, statt sie zu sprechen, wie er tat’. Again: in the court circle are sitting two ladies; the wife of Can Grande, a woman of commanding presence, and—as is suggested though not openly stated—the mistress of Can Grande, a woman of more facile charm. Suggested too, but only suggested, is the jealousy of the wife for the mistress. In the *Novelle* the monk hero forsakes his affianced bride, whom Dante endows with the personality of Can Grande’s wife, for a woman who is modelled on the personality of Can Grande’s mistress; and is murdered by the rival whom she has supplanted. But Meyer’s ingenuity goes no further than this, though it may well be asked what would have become of the form if he had made use of the trick, so common in the drama, of making the characters of the play step out of its framework and become living persons; if at the point in the story at which Diana stabs Antiope, the wife of Can Grande had also stabbed her rival.

This *Novelle* of Meyer’s is not cited here as an example of perfection in the *Novellenform*, but merely as an example of extreme virtuosity and ingenuity in the manipulation of technique, in what appears to be the rather

perverse pleasure of Meyer in setting himself technical conundrums and solving them. Technical skill can go no further than this; but the result partakes too much of the nature of a *tour de force* for it to be entirely satisfactory as a work of art. If Meyer's command of technique in this *Novelle* be compared with an equal mastery in Goethe's *Novelle*, the difference between an arbitrary and a legitimate use of technique will be apparent. In Meyer's *Novelle* technique has become in modern slang a 'stunt'—always a sign of decadence in art, since it exists for its own sake and not as something subservient to the significance of the work. Herein it may be said that Meyer approximates to the cult of sheer artistry, of *l'art pour l'art*, which was the ideal of the last years of the century.

But Meyer's sense of form was in reality far less genuine and sure than the ordinary historian of literature asserts. No doubt there is a certain surface brilliance about it as in the technique employed in the narrative here and in *Der Heilige*—and this brilliant overcoming of technical difficulties, this bravura effect, blinds the reader to the fact that the inner form is often very faulty and that which ought to be a single unity is in reality a confusion of two separate themes. In this very *Novelle*, *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*, two themes are imperfectly welded—two themes which are not necessarily connected at all: the theme of the monk who forsakes his vows, and the theme of the faithless bridegroom. The renegade monk is not at all necessary to the second half of the story: the bridegroom who abandons his bride for another on the eve of the wedding. Similarly in *Der Heilige*, the real theme, the conflict between King and Prelate, is entirely falsified by the episode of Becket's daughter

Grace whom the King abducts, thereby causing her death. In *Die Richterin*, the real theme, that of a woman whose present life is disturbed by the memory of a past crime, is obscured, during a great part of the Novelle, by the theme of brother and sister love. In all three of these works the inner form of the story is not impeccable but indeed very faulty. In fact, in his form as well as in his subject matter, there is with Meyer a good deal of façade, concealing the inherent weakness and dualism.

As there is in Keller's Novellen a loading of the form with detail—an overloading perhaps—but still an enrichment by reason of the living quality of the detail; so in Meyer's works there is a similar overloading of his form with historical detail, which does not in any way contribute to the convincingness of the theme, but merely clogs with the weight of mere learning. This is particularly noticeable in *Das Leiden eines Knaben*, in which Meyer bolsters up his main narrative with continual references to the historical and literary conditions of the time. Thus the reader is informed that Madame de Maintenon, who is merely the listener to the story, is a granddaughter of Agrippa d'Aubigné; he is reminded of Madame de Sévigné, of Molière's last performance in *Le Malade Imaginaire*; that le Duc de Saint Simon is writing *Mémoires*, and that Condé won battles for Louis XIV. This is merely another instance of that quality in Meyer which leads him to overdo everything and produces an excess of ingenuity, an excess of strength, an excess of learning, an excessive mannerism of style. Keller wrote once, defending the sober quality of his own style: 'Es liegt mein Stil in meinem persönlichen Wesen: ich fürchte immer maniert und anspruchsvoll zu werden, wenn ich den

Mund voll nehmen und passioniert werden wollte'. Meyer was a man and a poet without passion, an observer of, not a participator in life. When he has to deal with passion in his works, he does not find the natural expression for it, but uses a mannered, forced style, which aims at producing the effect of plasticity, but in reality merely chills the feeling of the reader.

It is usual to speak of Meyer's Novellen as being specifically historical Novellen¹⁰—and this is superficially true. But essentially Meyer was concerned not so much with the historical event and setting as with the ethical problem which was incorporated in the event of each Novelle. His Novellen are in the first instance Problem-novellen—just as those of Paul Heyse were—with the possible exception of *Das Leiden eines Knaben*. He himself wished to be recognized as a Problem-dichter, to be appreciated as the describer of conflicts of the soul: he wrote in a letter: 'Je n'écris absolument que pour réaliser quelque idée'. 'Certaines profondeurs de l'âme où j'aimerais descendre.' He resented praise of his work which stressed his power of resuscitating the past, because this was to him of secondary importance as compared with the problem of conscience which was the real theme of his stories. The proof of this inherent method of his—the proceeding from the problem to the characters and events and setting by which it was to be rendered 'anschaulich'—can be gathered from the fact that he made various attempts to 'place' the problem incorporated in his Novelle *Die Richterin*, and tried Sardinia and Sicily for settings before he finally decided upon the Rhaetian Alps at the time of Charlemagne. The essential content of all Meyer's Novellen is the ethical problem, a problem of conscience.

With regard to the last of his Novellen, *Angela Borgia*, he writes: 'Cette nouvelle est à proprement dire l'histoire de la conscience'. And if it be asked for what reason he places these problems in historical settings, the answer is given in his own words:

Je me sers de la nouvelle historique purement et simplement pour y loger mes expériences et mes sentiments personnels, la préférant au Zeitroman, parce qu'elle masque mieux et qu'elle distance davantage le lecteur. Ainsi sous une forme très objective et éminemment artistique, je suis au dedans tout individuel et subjectif. Dans tous les personnages du *Pescare*, même dans ce vilain Moroni, il y a du C.F.M.¹¹

The statement calls to mind Friedrich Schlegel's description of the Novelle, that it is particularly suited to render a subjective mood indirectly and as it were symbolically because of its natural tendency to objectivity. Meyer's Novellen form a singularly striking example of this, one in which at first sight the subjective and objective elements are an exact antithesis, and weakness, insecurity and doubt are concealed beneath the heroic attitude and the sculptural gesture.

The real Conrad Ferdinand Meyer has only lately been discovered.¹² Earlier biographers and critics of his work drew attention rather to the heroic façade than to the insecure dwellings it fronted and concealed. It seems a truer estimate of him to recognize that this too, with its strong, self-reliant, active and vital characters, is a wish-fulfilment of the real Meyer, who suffered under all the spiritual problems of a declining age.

Meyer's contribution to the development of the German Novelle was too original, too personally individual to have any real influence upon the genre as such. More-

over the German Novelle as a genre had exhausted its utmost possibilities in the works of Keller; every possible aspect of it had already been exploited and Keller's Novellen represent the summit of the development. Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's Novellen at the close of that development, like the stories of Kleist at the beginning, are too individual to be assimilated to any traditional form. Every writer of Novellen no doubt contributes certain individual features and enlarges the possibilities of the genre thereby; but not every kind of individual characteristic can be assimilated or is such that a later writer can profit by it. Kleist and Meyer are individual writers, whose specific qualities cannot easily be assimilated to the tradition of the genre, and their contribution compared with that of Keller, for instance, may be described as morbidly individual. Another writer of Novellen whose works are open to the same criticism is E. T. A. Hoffmann. All three writers have a certain originality which marks them out from other writers of Novellen and impresses them upon the memory and the imagination. Though their works considered singly may or may not conform to Heyse's theory and supply the 'Falcon', yet as a whole they have a more strongly marked silhouette, make a more vivid impression than that which is received from the works of other writers who have been discussed. Though they are less central and lie more on the periphery than the works of Keller, for instance, they attract more attention and seem to possess a greater positive quality than his. The reason is that, compared with the balance and harmony, the equal distribution and completeness of Keller's work, they obtrude some characteristic which is developed at the expense of the harmonious whole.

The Novelle is a bürgerliche genre. It reached the summit of its development, realized its essential form as a German genre in the works of writers like Stifter, Storm and above all Keller, writers standing within the confines of that literary movement known as Poetic Realism, which was the most characteristic expression of German Bürgertum of the middle of the nineteenth century. The critic von Lukačs in his book of essays, *Die Seele und die Formen*, writes: 'In the middle of the last century there were still in Germany, especially on the periphery, towns in which the old Bürgertum still remained strong and living, the Bürgertum which is the greatest contrast to that of to-day. Of this Bürgertum these writers were begotten, they are its genuine, great representatives.... Their works are the historical monument of Bürgertum'.¹³ Heyse and Meyer are no longer representatives of that Bürgertum, but individualists living outside of it. Heyse's individualism moves only on the surface of life, belongs to the world of fortuitous and irresponsible contacts—the world of hotels and railway carriages; and already in his works the cosmopolitanism of the twentieth century announces itself. Meyer's individualism is of that morbidly psychological nature which isolates the subject from the society which surrounds him. Both of them—Heyse in his cosmopolitanism, and Meyer in his susceptibility to the spiritual problems of his age—were representatives of the disintegrating forces from without and within, which were undermining the Bürgertum with its established mode and accepted code of life.

Chapter X

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BÜRGERLICHE FORM OF THE NOVELLE

The two tendencies which were undermining the *Novelle* as a *bürgerliche* form were the gradual disintegration of the framework of *bürgerliche* society which was taking place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the growing pre-occupation in literature with the psychology of the individual. The two tendencies are connected one with another as cause and effect. The historical events of 1870 had pernicious effects upon the intellectual life of Germany, in so far as they directed the interests of the nation at large upon external aims such as world-empire, Germany's legitimate place among the nations, the possession of material wealth and luxury. (The *Gründerzeit* catastrophe in the early 'seventies casts a lurid light upon the race for wealth.) All this led to the gradual invasion of the self-contained *bürgerliche* form of life by international elements which, together with the growth of industrialism and the accompanying development of socialism, loosened the solidarity of its fabric. Separated from the social framework within which his existence had developed hitherto—a framework embodying a definite view of life with its own moral code based on ideals of truth, genuineness, competence and ability in the conduct of life, courage in the face of difficulties and resignation in the face of misfortune—the individual as such became an object of heightened interest in his uniqueness. The general and perhaps inevitable tendency for

literature to employ the method of descriptive analysis in dealing with the psychology of the individual assigned less and less importance to the 'event' as the concrete core of the *Novelle*; and the more subtle the analysis of psychology became, the more volatilized the element of event became also. It may, however, be reasonably argued that, in so far as 'understanding' of the characters had come to be the ethos of the *Novelle*,¹ it was only logical that increasingly subtle methods should be employed to obtain the completest understanding possible. In this respect the genre contained within itself the germs of its own dissolution. Far-reaching in its consequences was the abandonment of the established ethical code which was common to all the writers of Poetic Realism in favour of a relativistic one, in accordance with which each 'case' was judged in respect of its individual circumstances; a change of ethical standpoint which can be observed already in the novels of Fontane, where similar instances of marital infidelity meet with different treatment at the hands of society (*L'Adultera* and *Effi Briest*). The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century see the dissolution of the *Bürgertum* as an established mode and code of social life, and with it the end of the *Novelle* as a specifically *bürgerliche* genre. The subject matter of the *Novelle* deals henceforth either with questions of individual psychology detached from any standardized background of accepted *bürgerliche* ethics, or with the problem of the relation of the individual to a *Bürgertum* already in decay.

Before, however, writers representing this phase in the decline of the *Novelle* are discussed, two representatives of an earlier phase must be considered, who, though they

do not stand within the circle of the Bürgertum which is the enclosing atmosphere of Poetic Realism, have at least definite affinities with the writers of that movement, like whom they possess also a very definitely accepted social background. These writers are the Austrians Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Ferdinand von Saar, though with the latter in a lesser and diminishing degree; and the equivalent for the Bürgertum of the Poetic Realists is for them the Austrian aristocratic world as it still existed at the end of the last century.

‘The higher nobility of Austria’, writes Walzel, in his essay on Ebner-Eschenbach, ‘forms a world to itself. It appears to be detached from the conditions under which the life of other human beings plays itself out. A wall separates it from the rest of humanity and protects it at the same time. One might speak of a life of beautiful appearance were it not built up very solidly upon great material wealth. It is the life of the grand seigneur and his family and also of an appendage of relatives not always provided with means.’²

It is in this world, a more specialized one certainly than the world of German Bürgertum, but one which, analogous to the latter, has its own established social mode, that the Novellen and tales of Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach are set. Whether in the ‘Palais’ in Vienna or in the castle in the country, she approaches the lives of her aristocratic friends or of her peasant subordinates as a member of the higher Austrian nobility and applies in her estimate of their characters and fates the ethical and social code which is binding upon herself as a member of that caste. Not that she accepts unreservedly the view of life which is held as a standard by her caste—a number of her works can be regarded as a criticism, though a

good-humoured and tolerant criticism of its weaknesses—but her view of life is fundamentally determined by her position within the Lebensform of the Austrian nobility.

Meeting with considerable discouragement in her earliest attempts at writing, since a Comtesse who was an authoress was in herself a violation of the social code of her world, she persevered with little success until the publication of her first volume of *Erzählungen* (1875), which was followed in 1881 by *Neue Erzählungen, Dorf- und Schlossgeschichten* (1883) and *Neue Dorf- und Schlossgeschichten* (1886). By the time she had reached the age of seventy she was recognized as one of the most eminent of Austrian writers, and her eightieth birthday afforded an opportunity for further acknowledgments of her fame and popularity.

She contributes nothing new to the form of the Novelle; what novelty there is in her work lies rather in the subject matter, in the revelation of a social class with its ideals, prejudices, weaknesses and its point of view with regard to its own members and its dependents, which had not hitherto been so competently and reliably described in literature. Her ethical standpoint, the differences inherent in the two social classes being conceded, is substantially that of the writers of Poetic Realism, and she has some affinities with Gottfried Keller, though the paedagogic element is not so pronounced in her. She is a realist in the sense in which her German contemporaries were realistic, but she knows that crude realism is not the business of the artist, though she was at one time claimed by the Naturalists as a pioneer of their movement. And it is as an artist that she handles her subjects, but with an artistry too self-effacing to call attention to itself.³

She is more concerned with the inner life of her characters than with their external appearance, but in accordance with the nature of the Novelle she reveals her characters rather by means of their actions than by a description of their feelings. And her ability in every form of narrative is above question. She wrote Novellen in dialogue form (*Ohne Liebe*), in letter form (*Der Nebenbuhler*), achieving even the *tour de force* of a Novelle in postcards (*Die Poesie des Unbewussten*). In *Komtesse Muschi*, again in letter form, the typical young sporting countess, with no thoughts except for her dogs and horses, reveals herself fully and unconsciously. In *Krambambuli* her hero is a dog, whom she places before a tragic alternative of conflicting loyalties. In *Die Freiherren von Gemperlein* in humorous form, in *Nach dem Tode* with a more tragic emphasis, the intimate connection of the land-owner with his land, his profound affection as well as his consciousness of his responsibilities, is the ethical basis. Her subject matter is in general taken from contemporary life, though in one or two stories (*Jakob Szela* and *Der Kreisphysikus*) she turns back to the period of Polish political disturbances for a more historical background.

Though her work does not substantially differ from that of the writers of Poetic Realism as a whole and is without any very striking originality, it entitles her, by its simplicity and truth, its observation and understanding of human nature, and the complete absence of sensational and meretricious elements, to a place among the 'Little Masters' of the nineteenth century. As a cultural document of a world which has now disappeared it has an additional value.

If Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach has affinities with

Gottfried Keller, Ferdinand von Saar reveals in temperament and predilections similarities with Theodor Storm. As with Storm the prevailing mood of his works is one of elegiac melancholy. He confesses a preference for the past, but a past of which the final outposts are still visible in the present; for people, their real life and activities belonging to earlier days, who are unable to adapt themselves to present conditions; for artisans and merchants, who have fallen a victim to industrialism; for aristocrats, who still cherish the memory of former greatness.⁴ But he lacks the rigid ethical standard which Storm in common with all the writers of Poetic Realism possessed, and his treatment of his characters is more indulgent, more forgiving. (A similar softness, which is perhaps characteristic of Viennese writers, is apparent in Grillparzer also, though it is absent in Stifter and Ebner-Eschenbach.) And though his view of life may be considered like that of the last named to be determined by the ethical and social mode of the Austrian nobility, with him more particularly that of the Austrian officer class, he steps outside of that circle in practice in relinquishing the military profession to become an independent literary man—which Keller, Storm and Stifter never were. The transition from a socially self-contained world, with the obligations and responsibilities which it imposes, to the freedom of individualism—a transition which, as has been pointed out, is the general tendency in German literature during the last quarter of the century—finds a characteristic exponent in him, and it is significant that the Viennese writers at the end of the century hailed him as their master.

His Novellen, which continued over a period of nearly forty years (the first, *Innocens*, was published in 1866), ap-

peared in various collections under the titles *Novellen aus Oesterreich* (1877), *Drei neue Novellen* (1882), *Schicksale* (1888), *Frauenbilder* (1891). All these together with *Schloss Kostenitz*—fifteen Novellen in all—were republished in two volumes in 1897 under the original title *Novellen aus Oesterreich*. In addition to these collections *Herbstreigen* appeared in 1896, *Nachklänge* in 1899, *Camera Obscura* in 1900 and, finally, *Tragik des Lebens*, a year before the author's death in 1906.

Saar's Novellen like those of Storm deal for the greater part with the theme of love (though not within the circle of the family), with a preference for situations in which it appears as an unreasoning attraction to which the characters yield without setting up any real resistance even when they realize that they are being drawn towards disaster. Frequently the theme is that of a woman's love for an unworthy or insignificant man—thus *Die Geigerin*, *Schloss Reichsegg*, *Geschichte eines Wiener Kindes* and, to a certain extent, *Schloss Kostenitz*, though here the heroine, the most ethereal of Saar's female characters, yields only in imagination and perishes in the moral conflict, which her inwardly acknowledged guilt sets up. Like Heyse, Saar tends to make the personality of a woman the centre of interest—in addition to the Novellen mentioned: *Marianne*, *Die Troglodytin*. Where the interest centres round a man he is usually one who has been defeated by circumstance (*Vae Victis*, *Tambi*, *Leutnant Burda*, *Seligman Hirsch*) and though not necessarily a weakling, of so sensitive an emotional nature, that he is unable to bear up against an unusually cruel blow of fortune, and seeks refuge in death, Leutnant Burda indeed with a desperate and extravagant display of courage.

The ethical attitude of Saar towards his characters hardly involves a moral judgment upon their conduct, but a mere acceptance of it in the spirit of pity. This tendency to apply no ethical standard to the characters but to treat them as perfectly neutral 'cases', with regard to whom it is not even necessary to understand sympathetically and forgive, but merely to observe with a supposed scientific detachment, is one of the connecting links between Saar and the writers of the Naturalistic movement at the end of the century. Their output in Novellen was indeed small and without distinction and necessarily so, for the importance assigned by them to the detailed description of *milieu* destroyed the possibility of a clear-cut narrative with a central incident so far outstanding as to command the attention by its strangeness. The so-called Novellen published by Arno Holz und Johannes Schlaf under the title *Papa Hamlet* in 1889 are not Novellen, whatever else they may be. But Gerhard Hauptmann's early work *Bahnwärter Thiel* (1887) has more formal qualities and exhibits the same characteristics as some of the Novellen of Saar: a detached transcription of reality in which the only ethical element is a sense of pity, though it is true that the transcription of reality is more meticulous, less artistically elaborated, than is usual with Saar. Hauptmann's other naturalistic story, *Der Apostel*, is merely a sketch for the novel *Der Narr in Christo, Emmanuel Quint*.

Saar's form, like that of Storm, is almost invariably the framework story—the framework being very variously treated. In some few Novellen the narrator of the story is a third person, but in the majority it is Saar himself. In three of the earliest Novellen he appears as the Austrian

lieutenant, who comes across the subject matter of the stories he relates in the course of his professional duties; in the later Novellen he appears like Heyse as the independent literary man, though his relation to the characters of the enclosed story is rarely so fortuitous as it is in the 'Bekanntschaftsnovellen' of Heyse. Saar's Novellen are fundamentally psychological Novellen, and in some of them—*Der Excellenzherr*, for instance—the event is of so slight a nature that the subject matter offers nothing distinctive enough to be regarded as a 'Falcon'.⁵

Like Ebner-Eschenbach and Saar, Eduard von Keyserling, the descendant of an old Courland family, belongs essentially to an aristocratic world, though one already in decay, and the mode of life of that world determines his attitude to men and events and his handling of them in his novels and Novellen. In a prose style of great delicacy and distinction and in a prevailing mood of weary resignation he presents erotic conflicts, the protagonists of which give the impression of being sub-normal in vigour and vitality and as it were surprised to find themselves overtaken by violent emotions, with which they are unable to cope (*Wellen, Am Südhang*). With an infinite subtlety and by means of the most delicate brushwork he builds up the psychology of his characters and traces the slightest reactions of their emotional life. But this detailed psychological motivation, like the minute description of *milieu* in the Naturalistic writers, is inimical to the Novelle and prevents the firm outline, which is essential to the genre, from emerging, indeed implies an abandonment of the attempt to produce it. When, in addition to the disintegrating effects of psychological description, the methods of psycho-analysis and the

scientific dissection of personality in other forms are brought to bear upon the genre, its downfall is completed. To compare a work like Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else* or Leonhard Frank's *Die Ursache*⁶—their skill of psychological analysis being nowise denied—with a classical *Novelle* is to deplore the degradation of a noble and dignified art form, existing in its own right, to the rank of a menial of science.

The transition from the methods of Poetic Realism to those of psycho-analysis and similar forms of psychological dissection, presumably in accordance with the changing needs of the age, can be observed again in the works of Hermann Hesse: the novel *Demian* published in 1921 under the pseudonym of Emil Sinclair constituting the turning-point. Hesse's early work stands definitely under the influence of Gottfried Keller; and this is true not only of the novel *Peter Camenzind* (1904) but also of the *Novellen* contained in the collections *Diesseits* (1907), *Nachbarn* (1908) and *Umwege* (1912).⁷ These stories, in spite of the grace and simplicity with which they are told, make but a pale and meagre impression when compared with the colour and opulence of Keller's imagination. Like so many of the *Novellen* of his model, Hesse's stories turn upon the question of the 'Tüchtigkeit' of the hero, the particular problem being the realization of his proper vocation: a narrower conception of the problem with which Keller's heroes are faced of finding their true function in life. In *Ladidel* (1912) and *Robert Aghion* (1913) the hero is successful; in *Walter Kömpff* (1908) he fails and ends disastrously, though here the issue is complicated and also deepened by the existence of spiritual problems as well. The setting is generally a *petit-bourgeois*

one of small shop-keepers, and, though not necessarily for that reason, the general impression is that rather insignificant lives are being recorded. The sober description of the hero's treasures in *Ladidel* is a poor substitute for the delighted gusto of Keller's account of Züs Bünslen's baroque collection, and the difference between the two descriptions may serve as a measure of the difference between the imaginative scope of the two writers. Insignificant as the characters are in these early Novellen they are conceived as existing within the framework of an acknowledged society, to whose code of ethics and behaviour tacit reference is consistently made. In Hesse's later work, of which *Klein und Wagner* (1920), recently republished in the collection *Der Weg nach Innen*, may serve as an example, the individual is separated from any form of society and fulfils his destiny as an isolated soul, and in this respect Hesse abandons the bürgerliche form of the Novelle.

All the elements which make for the disintegration of the form of the Novelle are assembled in the works of the Viennese writer, Arthur Schnitzler, intensified by a pre-occupation with psychological and pathological 'cases', largely involving erotic problems, of unusual subtlety and singularity. These are presented in a style of great delicacy, ease and precision, which enables the author to record the finest nuances of feeling, of physical and emotional reaction, which his professional acquaintance with the methods of psychiatry brought under his observation.

Schnitzler's Novellen have no unified social background; and though his characters belong for the most part to the leisured and well-to-do middle class, they are

unaware of any responsible relationship to it and live as individuals, concerned entirely with the gratification of their own needs for pleasure and erotic experience. They provide in themselves the most convincing proof that the Bürgertum, to which they nominally belong, is in an advanced stage of decay. 'These little Epicureans', writes Richard Specht, 'who are not even capable of a fine and noble gesture, are undoubtedly the product of a dying world.'⁸

It would be difficult to find in the works of any single author such a collection of trivial, worthless and egoistic people as those whose erotic and other emotions and experiences are recorded in the Novellen and plays of Arthur Schnitzler; people without ethical principles, to whom adultery means little more than a game of bridge, with whom love signifies not passion but the mere gratification of an emotional or purely physical impulse; people who are often of so petty and mean a nature, of such small and unmotivated malevolence, that, even when the skill with which they are presented and the ironic attitude which is often apparent are taken into consideration, it is impossible to feel the slightest concern about their fates.⁹ Even Schnitzler's one hero, *grand format*, 'der junge Medardus', in the play of that name contemplates an act of caddishness, which effectively destroys all sympathy with him. But these people and their world are described by Schnitzler with a softness and grace which is peculiar to Viennese writers, and characterizes also the works of Grillparzer and Saar though in a less intense form, whilst the prevailing Stimmung, likewise characteristically Viennese, is sentimental, frivolous and at the same time faintly melancholy. It is the melancholy of the pleasure-

lover and pleasure-seeker, who is aware both of the transitory nature of what he seeks and of its unsatisfying nature even whilst it is enjoyed.

Schnitzler's activities as a writer of Novellen began in 1892 with *Sterben*, already a piece of bravura writing describing the last year of a consumptive in which the dying hero makes a demand upon his mistress similar to that made by Herodes in Hebbel's tragedy, from the fulfilment of which she escapes however by more natural means than those which Marianne employs. This was followed in the course of the next five years by *Die Toten schweigen*, *Der Ehrentag* and *Die Frau des Weisen*. In 1900 appeared *Leutnant Gustl*, a 'stream of consciousness' Novelle (as though that were not in itself a rejection of the form) which brought Schnitzler into conflict with the military caste. The same form of narrative is employed by him later in *Fräulein Else* (1924). Amongst Schnitzler's Novellen pride of place belongs to *Der blinde Jeronimo und sein Bruder* (1900), a story of great beauty which fulfils almost all the formal requirements of the genre, and, describing the devotion of one brother to another and the undermining and re-establishment of confidence between them, moves in a different atmosphere from that of erotic adventure. *Dämmerseelen* (1907) and *Masken und Wunder* (1912) contain several stories dealing with mysterious and inexplicable happenings, treated with coolness and detachment. The Novellen, *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn*, *Casanovas Heimfahrt* and *Dr Gräsler, Badearzt*, which were written between 1913 and 1918, have as a basic theme the reluctance to admit the approach of age (in the *Gesammelte Schriften* they are published together under the title *Die Alternden*), and this theme underlies

also *Frau Berta Garlan* written already in 1900. Of these stories *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn*, which utilizes to some extent the methods of psycho-analysis, is the most revolting in subject matter, *Dr Gräser*, *Badearzt* the most trivial. Later Novellen are, in addition to *Fräulein Else* ('streams of consciousness' plus psycho-analytical methods), *Spiel im Morgengrauen* and *Traumnovelle* (psycho-analytical), in all of which the characteristic qualities of Schnitzler are apparent. His last Novelle bears the title *Flucht in die Finsternis* (1932).

Whereas in Schnitzler's Novellen the characters reveal unconsciously the fact that they belong to a Bürgertum already in decay, in the works of Thomas Mann, the relation of the artist, i.e. literary man, to the Bürgertum, becomes the consciously realized problem, whereby it may be asked whether the Bürgertum from which Mann feels himself as artist excluded, with its solid values and mode of life, is not rather an ideal than an actuality, or at least a state which belonged already to a past age at the time when he began to write. That he was himself at least partially aware of this seems to be proved by his novel *Buddenbrooks*, in which the apparent solidity of bürgerliche ideals is actually deceptive, for Toni, with all her stupidity, is the only member of the Buddenbrooks who is not inwardly false to the ideals, which outwardly determine the ethical attitude of the family.

Thomas Mann's contribution to the Novellen in German literature, such slighter works as *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* and *Luischen* being omitted, is confined to two examples, *Tonio Kröger* (1914) and *Der Tod in Venedig* (1913), for *Unordnung und frühes Leid* (1926), a work of extraordinary charm and loving penetration, may be

called a genre picture or Familienbild but is not a Novelle; and *Mario und der Zauberer* is essentially only a gruesome anecdote treated with a virtuosity which extracts every possibility of gruesomeness from it. In so far as *Tonio Kröger* is a Novelle, it is a Novelle of the discursive type, like the later works of Tieck, lacking entirely the element of 'event'. The climax consists in an apparently impersonal, but actually extremely personal, discussion on the problem which has never ceased to occupy the mind of Mann: the relation of the literary man to Bürgertum; and it is open to question whether the problem as stated by Tonio Kröger to his Russian friend is in effect an absolute one and not merely one which has validity only for a writer with the particular temperament and particular talents of the author. The Novelle ends on the suggestion that Mann, in so far as he may be identified with his hero, will henceforth produce works of literature which will reveal the creative writer rather than the literary man. The promise inherent in that suggestion has not been fulfilled. Thomas Mann's work as a creative writer was already done in *Buddenbrooks*, and the characters which he presents in his later works are merely carriers of ideas, representatives of attitudes of mind and points of view. This is particularly true of *Der Zauberberg* which, with all its intellectual, critical and philosophical richness, does not contain a single living being. Even Peeperkorn is an idea and not a person of flesh and blood. Mann approaches most nearly to the creation of living beings in his presentation of children of a highly sensitive nature: the first chapter of *Tonio Kröger* and *Unordnung und frühes Leid*. In his description of his characters he indulges frequently in a method which consists in treating

them seemingly with serious attention and as it were ridiculing them when their backs are turned, a method which may be described as literary bad manners. This is particularly noticeable in *Tristan*, in which another problem which preoccupies the author, the conflict between mind and life, is embodied in the persons of the writer Spinell and the merchant Klöterjahn.

Of the principal, the only character in Mann's masterpiece of conscious artistry *Der Tod in Venedig*, of Gustav von Aschenbach, it may be said that he is not so much a living being as a human vessel in which the process of decay is analyzed; and there is in the methods of the author in general a tendency to isolate mental or physical processes, separating them from the person to whom they occur, and to describe them in themselves, of which tendency the description of the symptoms of typhoid fever unrelated to the child Hanno, who succumbs to that illness, in the second volume of *Buddenbrooks* is the most striking example. The complete disintegration of Aschenbach's ethical being, of which his death from cholera is merely the external symbol, seems from a purely human point of view unjustified and aesthetically unmotivated in respect of a man, for whom strict and even austere self-discipline had been the consistently observed code of life.

In no other Novelle does the element of symbolism¹⁰ occupy so important a place, absorb the external action so completely, as to constitute in itself the whole essence of the story which consists fundamentally in the description of the successive states of mind of a character condemned by the author to pass through all the stages which lead to the dissolution of his ethical personality. Gustav von Aschenbach, a writer of mature years, driven by an

obscure impulse, sets out upon a journey to the south of Europe; sees in Venice a youth of such perfect beauty that he is unable to tear himself away from the pleasure of watching him every day, and remaining in Venice, in spite of an epidemic of cholera which is emptying the city of visitors, is overtaken by the contagion and dies. Beside him there is no living being in the book, unless it be the barber who persuades Aschenbach to rejuvenate himself by means of cosmetics, for even the old fop hardly exists in his own right but rather as a figure anticipating a later stage in Aschenbach's decay. All the other characters who appear have merely symbolic value: the traveller, the gondolier, the street singer, the lovely Tadzio himself; and by means of continual reminiscences of and even allusions to Greek statues in the description of them, as well as by his method of allowing them to appear out of nothingness and disappear again equally mysteriously, their symbolical significance is underlined. All this is achieved by means of a conscious and calculated artistry, and the fate of Aschenbach is presented so purely intellectually as to preclude the possibility of any emotional reaction to it on the part of the reader and indeed to suggest that none is aimed at or desired.

Stylistic treatment and symbolism which were inherent in the genre from the first, Verinnerlichung of the subject matter, which was imported into it by Goethe, reach in Mann's Novelle a point beyond which no further progress is possible; while the element of Bürgertum, which is in *Tonio Kröger* still a matter for discussion, is obtrusively discarded for the world of literature, which is for Thomas Mann specifically its antithesis. While observing the external form of the Novelle in his concentration upon the

one figure and his fate and in his retention of the one striking event (which is however only in its inward significance striking), Thomas Mann has written in *Der Tod in Venedig* a work which exhausts the last possibilities of which the genre is capable.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to describe in broad outline the development of the German Novelle as a specific literary genre from its emergence in the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* of Goethe to its decay in our own times. I have conceived of it as a genre possessing characteristics which distinguish it from the Romance Novelle, from which however it takes its origin, and shown the various stages through which it passed until it realized fully its essential form. Starting from the conviction that it was a bürgerliche genre—a conviction which is substantiated by the general consensus of theorists as well as by historical facts—I found its greatest achievements in the works of a group of writers who are representatives in their lives as in their writings of a period in German history in which the ideals of a self-contained and consciously cherished Bürgertum dominated German life;¹ its decay in a period in which that Bürgertum itself fell into decay, and the individual, separating himself from the established framework of a recognized form of society, became in his code of values and conduct a law unto himself, ignoring the ties which acceptance of a controlling social mode imposed upon him. When the social framework ceased to be binding upon the individual the background and terms of reference of the Novelle—the tacit assumption and acknowledgment of a certain fixed code of ethics and conduct of life—ceased to exist. And all that has since been written having superficially the form of the Novelle, often with a brilliance of technique, and a parade of psychological and psycho-

pathological insight, has tended more and more to become the expression of an individualistic view of life, and of an individualistic judgment in so far as judgment is not entirely withheld and the mere constataion of a 'case' is held to be the only admissible standpoint. Further the tendency of modern narrative fiction has been more and more towards the description of states of mind and soul, with a corresponding disregard and neglect of the element of external event, which, however greatly it may be loaded with inner significance, is the essential core of the *Novelle*. Where this element does not exist in a story there the *Novelle* does not exist either.

The development of the German *Novelle*, as it has been described in this book, may be briefly recapitulated in conclusion. The *Novelle* as a genre enters German literature at the end of the eighteenth century in the stories contained in Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, where an attempt is made to acclimatize the Romance form to German tastes. It immediately suffers a change in so far as Goethe informs it with an ethical significance which is not inherent in the original form as such but is derived from the moralizing stories of the *Aufklärung*, against whose lack of literary form Goethe's own stories were a practical protest. This change is only the first example of the prevailing tendency in German *Novellen* writers to shift the main stress from the external event to the inner significance of that event, a tendency which manifests itself throughout the nineteenth century in various forms, and when pushed to extremes brings about the dissolution of the form. Kleist's *Novellen* opened up the field of metaphysical problems as possible subject matter, and stressed the lyrical, subjective

element in the genre, an element which, as Friedrich Schlegel had pointed out, was implicit in it but had never been exploited to such an extent by earlier writers. Further it may be said that Kleist opened the way for the historical, the exotic and the character *Novelle*, in all of which respects he removes it from that aspect of it which may be described as gossip raised to the level of literature. The Romantics, Tieck, Hoffmann, Arnim, Eichendorff and others, brought as new elements the supernatural, the purely fantastic and the preponderance of *Stimmung* as being the real content rather than the events recorded, thereby opening up for the *Novelle* the world of the unconscious and the subconscious, of inanimate nature and man's intimate connection with the world of nature as distinct from the world of human nature in society. Further in Hoffmann are to be found the beginnings of the *Künstlernovelle*. In the later *Novellen* of Tieck and of the writers of *Jung Deutschland* the genre becomes a vehicle for the discussion of contemporary problems, a method of conveying by means of characters and incidents created *ad hoc* views and opinions on matters of topical importance. These *Novellen*, which may be described as *Diskussions-* or *Tendenznovellen* may be dismissed as a merely episodic phenomenon, since they had no lasting effect upon the development of the genre, and represent a tendency which led nowhere and is of importance only in so far as it brought the *Novelle* back from the purely imaginary world of later Romanticism into contact with the world of actuality. But this same effect—the re-orientation of the genre from the purely fantastic to the world of actuality—is more fruitfully achieved by the actual practice of writers like Gotthelf and Auerbach in

their creation of the Dorfnovelle, a transcription of reality, though a very circumscribed reality, in the life of peasants and the countryside, whereby the Novelle reverts again to its original perhaps essential form, as being a realistic genre, dealing with man in society. All these new elements are utilized and consolidated in the works of the Poetic Realists of the middle of the century, and the German Novelle attains to a maximum of scope, beauty and effectiveness within the framework of the bürgerliche mode of life as observed by Stifter, Storm and Keller. With Meyer and Heyse, whose relationship to that Bürgertum is less essential than that of their greater contemporaries, the individualistic, psychological element assumes undue importance. The disintegration of the form begins and is continued to the point of dissolution by the writers of the end of the last and the beginning of the present century.

As a reaction against the formlessness which had befallen narrative literature at the beginning of the present century two writers, in whom the sense of form was both vital and delicate, Paul Ernst and Wilhelm Schäfer, cultivated anew in German literature the strict form of the Novelle. Thrusting aside as alien to this form all pre-occupations with inner significance, psychological analysis, or the discussion of ethical problems, they attempted to revive the art of pure narrative and published a series of volumes of tales in which the story-teller's art is revealed in all its clarity and severity, with an observance of the formal outline, which no superfluous matter is allowed to obscure (Wilhelm Schäfer, *Anekdoten*; Paul Ernst, *Geschichten deutscher Art*; *Romantische Geschichten*, and many others).

It remains, however, open to question whether this consciously simplified and stylized type of narrative corresponds to the requirements of the present age;² rather it would seem that the function of the *Novelle* is being assumed by the narrative form less dignified, less careful of style, and more sensational which is now recognized in Germany as a specific genre: 'die Kurzgeschichte' or short story.

Appendix

ANALYSES OF NARRATIVES

The following synopses of six Novellen with accompanying charts have been made in order to show the variety of methods possible in the order of the narrative. It will be observed that the straightforward chronology of events is practically never observed, but that in keeping with the artistry of the form, the natural order of events is elaborately varied for the sake of effectiveness. In most of the examples given reference is made near the end of the story to some happening or circumstance lying far back in the sequence of events, sometimes revealing a circumstance hitherto unrecorded, important for the complete understanding of the narrative, sometimes stressing a fact already known. The fact revealed near the end of the story is usually a confirmation of something already surmised and does not constitute a startling surprise. The surprise technique is on the whole foreign to the more dignified style of the Novelle and belongs rather to the cruder effects of the short story.

It is not always possible to find a Wendepunkt or turning-point in the story such as Tieck requires. Of the six Novellen here analyzed, *Der blonde Eckbert*, *Die Marquise von O.*, *Immensee* have an easily recognizable one—marked on the chart with a square—*Die Marzipanliese* has two, one dependent upon the other, in *Vom braven Kasperl und vom schönen Annerl* it must be placed if anywhere at the moment at which the old woman reveals the fact that Annerl is to be executed. From this point onwards

the events hurry to their conclusion. At the same time it does not affect the experiences of Kasperl, whose story is already ended. In *Der Landvogt von Greifensee* there is no Wendepunkt.

In the alphabetical notation (*a*) represents the earliest event recorded in time order, (*b*) the next one and so on. In none of the examples does the narrative begin with (*a*).

DER BLONDE ECKBERT (LUDWIG TIECK)

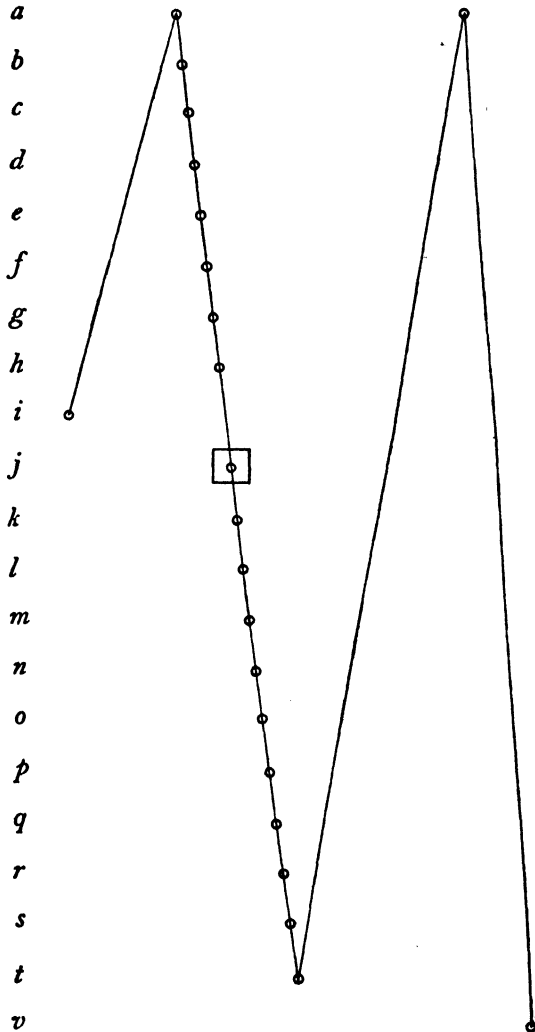
The knight Eckbert and his wife Bertha lived in a district of the Harz mountains. Both of them were fond of solitude and rarely invited guests to their castle. Only Philip Walther became the intimate friend of Eckbert, and on one occasion on which Walther was spending the evening at the castle, Eckbert asked his wife to relate the story of her youth to his friend. She agreed to do this because she felt it wrong to conceal anything from a man of so noble a mind (*i*).

Bertha was the child of a poor shepherd who ill-treated her because she was a burden to him (*a*). One morning she ran away into the wood and wandered for four days, coming at length into a rocky and desolate district in which she was overcome with fear and hunger (*b*). At last she met an old woman who gave her wine and bread and took her to her cottage, where she was welcomed by a little dog and a bird which sang a song with human words (*c*). She lived with the old woman for four years, at the end of which time she discovered that the bird laid every day an egg containing a jewel (*d*). The old woman was frequently absent for weeks on end, during which time Bertha was left in charge of the cottage, the bird

and the dog. When she was fourteen years old she felt the desire to leave the cottage and go out into the world, realizing that if she took the bird with her she need never lack money (*e*). At last she could resist the desire no longer: tying up the dog, but taking the bird and a vessel full of jewels with her she set out into the world and after wandering a great distance settled down in a house of her own (*f*). The bird, which had long since ceased to sing, one day sang a new song the words of which expressed its regret at having left the solitude of the forest. The next day it was dead (*g*). Bertha was overcome with fear at her own solitude and exposure to dangers and married Eckbert (*h*). Having completed her story, Bertha bids Walther good-night who reveals the fact that he knows the name of the dog, which Bertha had left behind in the cottage years before (*j*). Eckbert regrets his action in asking Bertha to narrate her story; Bertha herself is taken ill; a coolness springs up between the two friends, who now rarely see each other (*k*). Bertha grows worse, and summoning her husband to her bedside tells him that the thought that Walther knew the name of the dog, which she herself had forgotten, allowed her no peace (*l*). Eckbert is disturbed and restless; he takes his crossbow and wanders out into the woods where he sees Walther in the distance. Without knowing what he is doing, he shoots Walther (*m*). When he returns home he finds Bertha dead (*n*). Eckbert leaves his castle and seeks solace in the society of a town, where a young knight Hugo makes a friend of him (*o*). He feels the need to confess to his friend that he is a murderer, whereupon Hugo suddenly assumes the appearance of the murdered Walther (*p*). Eckbert sets out on a solitary journey, meets a peasant

who turns into Walther (*q*), hears the song of the bird (*r*) and meets the old woman, who tells him that she was his

DER BLONDE ECKBERT



friend Walther, his friend Hugo (*s*) and that Bertha was his sister (*t*) who was the daughter of a knight who caused

her to be brought up by the shepherd (*a*), because she was not the child of his wife but of another woman. Eckbert loses his reason and dies (*v*).

The *Novelle* falls into two distinct halves—the story of Bertha's early life, and the events which are the outcome of her telling of that story. The *Wendepunkt* occurs when Walther reveals the fact that he knows the name of the dog. In this *Novelle* alone among those analyzed there is an entirely unexpected surprise at the end: the old woman's revelation that Eckbert and Bertha are brother and sister. It is aesthetically unjustifiable, contributes in no way to the significance of the story and would seem to be a mere gratuitous piece of gruesomeness, which defeats its own end; it is in fact an attempt to rationalize that sense of mystery, guilt and gloom which hangs over the whole story and is of more importance than the actual incidents.

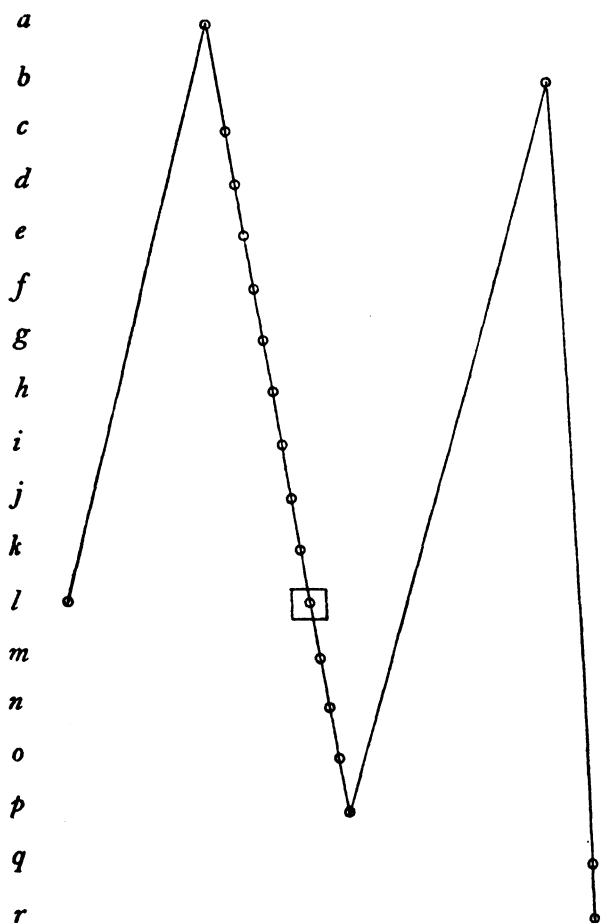
DIE MARQUISE VON O. (HEINRICH VON KLEIST)

The Marquise von O., a young widow and mother of several children living with her parents in the North of Italy, causes a notice to be inserted in the papers, that, having without her knowledge become pregnant, she is prepared to marry the unknown father of the child that is to be born, if he will reveal his identity (*l*). Some time before, the castle in which the Marquise and her parents were living was attacked by a regiment of Russian soldiers, and the Marquise was exposed to the danger of being violated, a danger from which she was rescued by the timely intervention of a Russian officer, who brought her to a place of safety, whereupon she became unconscious

(a). The officer then called for help and returned to the battle (c). After the disturbances had been quelled the father of the Marquise sought to persuade the officer (Graf F—) to present himself before his daughter to receive her thanks, but in vain (d); shortly afterwards the news was brought that Graf F— had been fatally wounded in the campaign (e). The Marquise becomes unwell, showing the signs common to the early stages of pregnancy (f). The Graf returns a few weeks later and demands the hand of the Marquise in marriage with the request that the wedding may take place before he sets out on an official journey which will occupy some months: his request is refused, and he thereupon gives up his plans for the journey, at the risk of punishment for failing to carry out military orders, and takes up his residence with the family of the Marquise (g). The Marquise agrees to accept the proposal of the Graf, but persuades him to set out on his journey and if possible retrieve the despatches for which he was responsible, now handed over to the charge of another. She steadfastly refuses to marry him until he returns from his journey and the Graf departs (h). The Marquise discovers that she is pregnant, confides in her mother, who refuses to believe in her daughter's innocence and commands her to leave the house (i). After an unavailing appeal to her father, who attempts to separate her children from her, the Marquise decides to take her fate into her own hands and await the birth of the child in solitude (j). The Graf returns to the house of the Marquise's parents, and learning that she has been cast off, asseverates her innocence and hastens to the house in which she is living, but is repulsed by her (k). The Graf sees the notice in the paper, that the Mar-

quise will marry the unknown father of her child if he will reveal his identity (*l*). A notice appears in the papers that if the Marquise will go to the house of her father at

DIE MARQUISE VON O.



11 o'clock on a given day, the man whom she is seeking will prostrate himself before her (*m*). The Marquise writes to her parents, asking that the man who presents himself on a given day may be directed to come to her

house, since it is not permitted to her to receive him in her father's house. When her father returns the letter unanswered, her mother secretly visits the Marquise, and tests her innocence by narrating falsely that one of the servants had the day before confessed to having violated her daughter. Convinced by her daughter's reaction to this news that she is innocent, she determines to stand by her in spite of the opposition of her father (*n*). The Marquise returns to her home with her mother who persuades the father of his daughter's innocence and brings about a reconciliation (*o*). The Graf appears and announces himself as the father of the Marquise's child (*p*) and confesses that he took advantage of her unconscious state on the day of the siege to violate her (*b*). The Marquise refuses to marry him but yields to the wishes of her parents and goes through a ceremony of marriage with him on the following day (*q*). The Graf renews his wooing of her and regains her confidence so that a year later the marriage ceremony is celebrated anew (*r*).

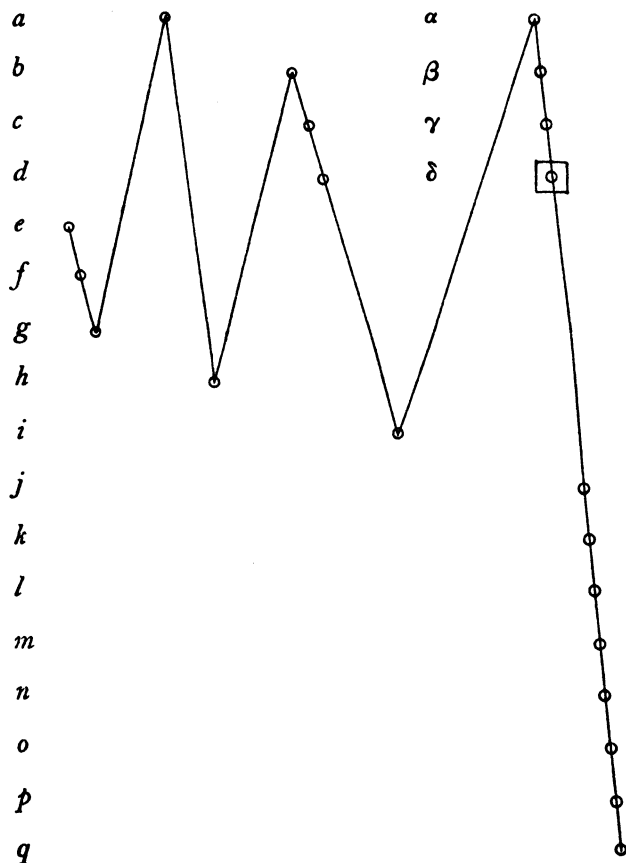
The scheme in this *Novelle* is straightforward, following chronologically the order of events, with the important variant that the most striking event is anticipated at the outset of the story. Further, one link in the chain of events (*b*) is withheld until nearly the end. As in *Die Marzipanliese* so here it is not the aim of the author to surprise the reader. He aims rather at a confirmation of the hints which have been given throughout the story as to the real father of the child.

GESCHICHTE VOM BRAVEN KASPERL UND VOM
SCHÖNEN ANNERL (CLEMENS BRENTANO)

The narrator finds an old peasant woman at 11 o'clock at night sitting, surrounded by curious onlookers, on the steps of the Duke's palace, preparing to spend the night there (*e*). The onlookers disperse and the narrator enters into conversation with the old woman (*f*). The officer of the guard, Graf Grossinger, an acquaintance of the narrator, passing by gives the old woman a rose and a thaler, and asks that he may have the words of the song which she was singing as he passed (*g*). Reminded of her youth by the rose, she begins to speak of her grandson, who was a soldier, and talked of nothing but his soldier's honour when he came home on furlough (*a*). The old woman asks the narrator, having learned that he is a writer by profession, to draw up a petition to the Duke for her, that two lovers may be buried together, and that the corpse of one of them may not be used for anatomical purposes (*h*). She is persuaded to explain the cause of this demand and relates the fate of her grandson, Kasperl, and her godchild, Annerl, whom Kasperl loved and to whom he imparted his ideas of honour (*b*). Returning to his home on leave after having been wounded in the French wars, Kasperl puts up for a night at an inn near his destination and is robbed of the horse which was entrusted to him (*c*). Overcome by distress he hastens home and finds that the thieves were his father and step-brother, and conceiving that his honour is thereby irretrievably besmirched he commits suicide (*d*). It is now daybreak and the narrator and the old woman set out to carry the gilded wreath and the notebook which Kasperl had in-

tended for Annerl to her on her 'day of honour', as the old woman describes it (*i*). On the way she narrates the story of Annerl. Annerl's mother had died when she was three years old and entrusted her to the care of the old

VOM BRAVEN KASPERL UND VOM SCHÖNEN ANNERL



woman (α). The old woman had called in at the house of the executioner, who had cut a slight wound in Annerl's neck with his axe because the axe had stirred in its case when the child had entered the room, according to folk

superstition a sign that it was destined to draw her blood (β). On the following day the old woman and Annerl had been present at the execution of a malefactor and the severed head had rolled towards the child and fixed its teeth in her apron (γ). All these portents prove that Annerl was destined to be beheaded, and in truth, during Kasperl's absence in France, she was seduced and had murdered her child (δ) and it is for her execution that very morning that the old woman is waiting. The narrator rushes to his friend Grossinger and implores him to take him to the Duke to obtain pardon for Annerl (j). Grossinger refuses to admit him to the Duke, but the Duke himself, disturbed by the noise, summons the suppliant to his presence and hears his story (k). The Duke seizes a woman's veil and commands Grossinger to fasten it to his drawn sword and ride as fast as possible to the place of execution, waving it as a sign of reprieve (l). Grossinger arrives too late (m), the executioner holds up the head of Annerl and Grossinger confesses that he is her seducer (n).

Kasperl and Annerl are buried together in one grave (o), the old woman dies (p), Grossinger poisons himself (q).

The scheme of this *Novelle* is complicated by the fact that the old woman has two separate stories to tell of the preliminary happenings which affect the further course of the action. I have therefore used a double form of notation for the parallel life histories of Kasperl and Annerl. A certain element of surprise is introduced towards the end of the *Novelle* by making Grossinger reveal the fact that it is he who is the seducer of Annerl, whereby the emotional tension of the scene at the place of execution

is heightened. Like *Immensee* Brentano's Novelle is one of Stimmung, to the creation of which the interpolated folk song contributes.

IMMENSEE (THEODOR STORM)

The Novelle begins with a description of the hero, Reinhard Werner, as an old man returning to his solitary abode at sunset. As he sits alone in his room, a beam of moonlight falls upon the picture of a girl, Elisabeth, whose face recalls his youth (*x*).

Two children, Reinhard and Elisabeth, are playing together in a meadow (*a*).

Seven years later Reinhard leaves home to study in the town, promising to send to Elisabeth the fairy tales which he writes, for her to read and criticize. On the day before he departs, they wander in the woods together, and Reinhard realizes that he loves the child who had hitherto been merely a playmate (*b*).

Description of Reinhard's Christmas Eve in the town as a student. He is drawn away from the attraction of a gypsy girl by a parcel and letters, which arrive in his lodgings from his mother and Elisabeth (*c*).

Reinhard returns home at Easter and meets Elisabeth again. He is disturbed by her mother's talk of a young man named Erich. On parting he asks her to wait two years to learn a secret which he will tell her when they next meet. She promises to do so (*d*).

Nearly two years later Reinhard learns, in a letter from his mother, that Elisabeth has promised to marry Erich (*e*).

Years pass and Reinhard, at the invitation of Erich,

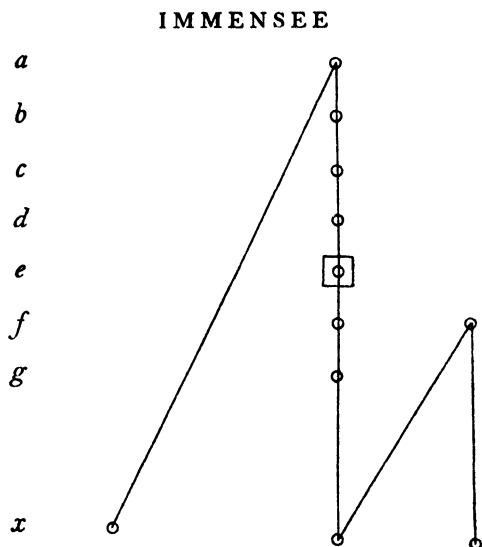
visits him on his estate 'Immensee', where he is greeted in a friendly manner but with a certain troubled reserve by Elisabeth, who is now Erich's wife. Reinhard produces some of his poems with accompanying melodies; when he reaches one, in which a girl complains that she was married against her will to a man whom her mother chose for her, Elisabeth begins to tremble and leaves the room. In the late evening Reinhard swims out into the lake to pluck a water lily, but returns without having brought it with him (*f*).

The next day on returning from a walk with Elisabeth, Reinhard meets a gypsy girl, who reminds him of the one he knew during his student days: she sings snatches of an old song which he remembers. At dawn the next morning, after a sleepless night, he leaves the house, and Elisabeth, who appears at that moment, takes leave of him with the presentiment that he will never return (*g*).

The *Novelle* concludes with a renewed description of Reinhard as an old man sitting in the room (*x*). Before him rises a vision of the lake in which an unattainable water lily is floating (*f*). The maid brings in a lamp and he returns to the present (*x*).

This scheme represents the simplest form of the *Erinnerungs-novelle*. Starting from a point in the present (*x*) the hero recalls in chronological order the events of the past (*abcdefg*). With one single exception, the allusion to the water lily a second time, the chronological sequence is undisturbed. The last few paragraphs complete the framework with a return to the present. It is peculiar to this *Novelle* that the actual incidents receive very little attention as such; but take the form rather of a series of isolated *Stimmungen*. The essence of the story finds ex-

pression in the two songs: 'Heute, nur heute bin ich so schön', and 'Meine Mutter hat's gewollt'. I have separated the incidents of the past (*abc*, etc.) from the present (*x*) by a gap in the sequence of letters because a considerable time must be assumed as elapsing between the incidents recalled in memory and the date at which they are recalled.



DIE MARZIPANLIESE (FRIEDRICH HALM)

The merchant Paul Horváth meets the youth Franz Bauer as a vagrant by the road side, takes him home with him and gives him a post as bookkeeper in his business after testing his ability (*f*); Franz, now known by the Hungarian name of Ferencz, instructs Horváth's daughter Czenczi in German and learns Hungarian from her (*g*); Antal, a trusted servant of Horváth, adopts a hostile attitude to Ferencz, warns his master against him, both on account

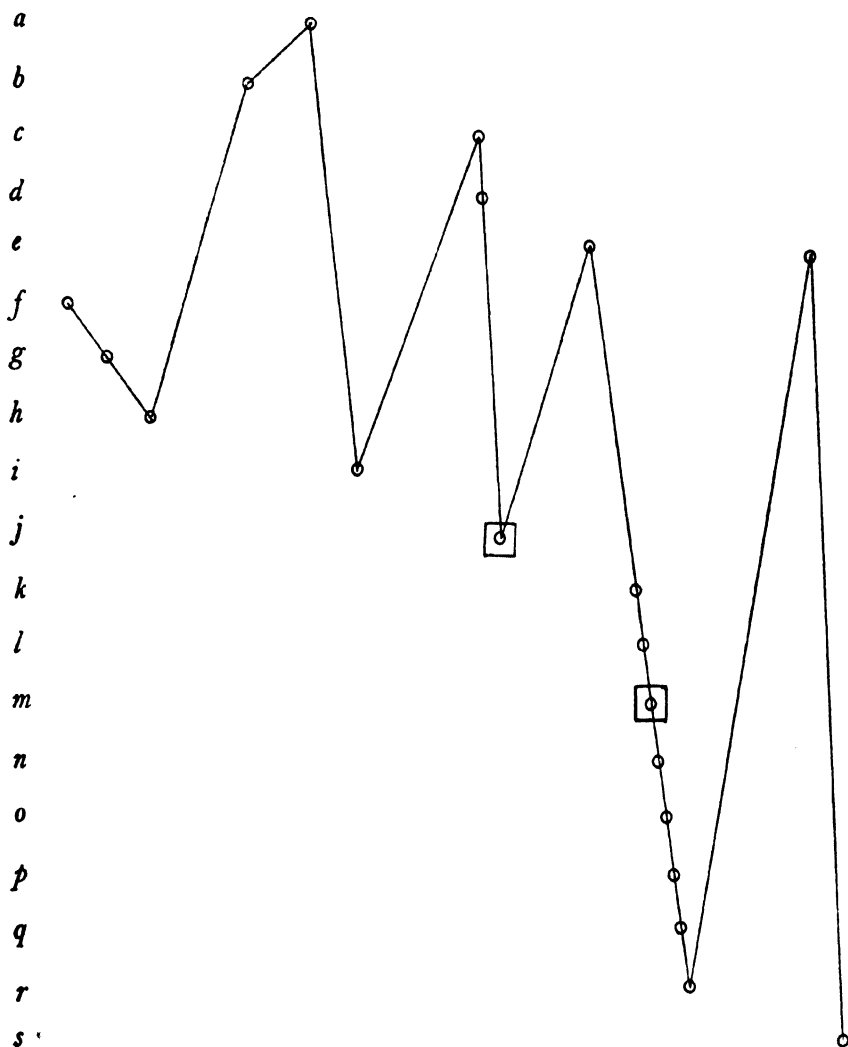
of his suspicious behaviour and his intentions with regard to Czenczi (*h*). Two years pass by, during which Ferencz has won the affections of Czenczi. One evening a guest comes to the house whose attention Ferencz takes precautions to avoid. The guest relates the story of a murder, the doer of which is still undiscovered. Some years before he had seen in a small town which he frequently visited a young man of elegant appearance in intimate conversation with an old hag known as Marzipanliese and suspected of witchcraft (*b*); inquiring into the circumstances he had learned that the young man in question had taken lodgings with the old woman, whose fortune he hoped to inherit (*a*). Ferencz attempts unobserved to leave the room in which the company is listening to the story but is ordered by Horváth to remain (*i*). The guest continues his story. A short time afterwards he had returned to the small town and found that the old woman had been strangled (*c*); the young man had expressed the greatest grief, which, on it becoming known that Marzipanliese had left all her money to charitable institutions, had changed into expressions of the utmost hatred and despair (*d*). At this point in the story Ferencz faints and Czenczi, revealing her passion for him, is violently reprimanded by her father, and both she and Ferencz retire (*j*). The guest continues his story: suspicion had fallen upon the young man, who disappeared, apparently having committed suicide, but nothing could be proved against him (*e*). The next morning Horváth visits Ferencz in his room and orders him to leave the neighbourhood, which Ferencz agrees to do (*k*). Ferencz meets Czenczi and persuades her to run away with him as soon as her father has set out on the business journey which he proposes to

undertake in the course of the next few days. The problem where Ferencz shall conceal himself in the interval is solved by Czenczi, who locks him into a cellar and undertakes to supply him with food and drink every evening after the household had retired to bed (*l*). Horváth departs on his journey, after postponing it for two days, during which time Ferencz has remained locked up in the cellar. At last the time for their flight arrives, and Czenczi, whom the agitations of the preceding days have greatly disturbed, descends at midnight to the cellar but is confronted by the figure of an old woman, which she recognizes as the ghost of Marzipanliese (*m*). She becomes unconscious, is found by two workmen who carry her into the house where she remains delirious for several days, rousing herself at midnight every day to ask for the keys of the cellar and making an effort to leave her bed (*n*). Horváth returns on hearing of the illness of his daughter, and when on the seventh day she returns to consciousness and reveals the fact that Ferencz is locked in the cellar, descends into it and finds the young man dead (*o*). Czenczi recovers but Horváth falls ill and dies (*p*). In the hope of discovering something about Ferencz's relatives Czenczi opens his letter case and learns from documents contained therein that his real name was Anton Lenhart (*q*). She sends these documents to the business friend of her father, who had related the story of Marzipanliese, and hears from him that Ferencz alias Anton Lenhart was the undiscovered murderer (*r = e*). Czenczi retires into a convent (*s*).

In this *Novelle* the two parts of the narrative (*abcde*) and (*fgh*, etc.) are apparently unconnected. Where they interleave in (*baicdje*) the reader already has a suspicion

of their connection, which is not however confirmed until the end of the Novelle ($r = e$). Here the effect aimed at is again not one of surprise but of the confirmation of a premonition already felt.

DIE MARZIPANLIESE



DER LANDVOGT VON GREIFENSEE
(GOTTFRIED KELLER)

The Landvogt von Greifensee, Salomon Landolt, holds a military inspection in a village near Zurich, at which most of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood are present, including 'Distelfink', a lady of some thirty-five years, now married, who had been Landolt's first love. The two old friends greet each other (*f*). On his way home Landolt evolves the idea of asking the five women whom he had loved vainly in his youth to spend a day together with him in his castle (*g*). He imparts the plan to his middle-aged housekeeper Frau Marianne who enters into the spirit of the project (*h*) and the ladies are invited.

1. *The story of Distelfink (Salome)*. Landolt meets Salome in his twenty-fifth year on a country estate and falls in love with her (*a*¹). After a day spent together planting cherry-trees (*b*¹) Landolt proposes to Salome in a letter, in which however he paints in such gloomy colours his family history that Salome's parents will not hear of the match (*c*¹). Salome refuses Landolt and shortly afterwards marries someone else (*d*¹).

2. *The story of Hunswurstel (Figura Leu)*. Landolt meets Figura Leu at the house of her uncle, where every Sunday morning she distributes permissions to go outside the city walls to all those who come to her with various pretexts (*a*²). Landolt is attracted by the frankness of Figura and attempts to gain a closer acquaintance by joining a society of which her brother is a member and Bodmer is the president (*b*²). Having offended against the regulations of the city both young men are summoned

to the presence of Martin Leu, Figura's uncle, to be reprimanded, on which occasion Landolt meets Figura again, and the two take pleasure in each other's company (c^2). At a party given by Gessner at which various other literary celebrities are present Figura is suspected of making fun of Landolt who withdraws from the society in embarrassment (d^2). Figura follows him, kisses him as a sign that she is fond of him, but then explains that she can never marry because there is a taint of hereditary madness in her family (e^2).

3. *The story of Kapitän (Wendelgard Gimmel)*. Landolt meets Wendelgard at the house of her father, a swaggering fencing master addicted to drink, and is attracted by her beauty (a^3). Wendelgard gets into debt and is threatened with lawsuits, whereupon Landolt, though still dependent upon his parents, undertakes to settle the debts which he does with money obtained from his grandmother (b^3). Landolt proposes to Wendelgard, who asks for seven days in which to consider, and departs with her father to a watering place where she meets Figura Leu (c^3). Taken into her confidence by Wendelgard, Figura arranges that her brother, disguised as a wealthy Frenchman, shall make love to Wendelgard, who in the hope of winning a rich husband, writes to Landolt a letter of refusal (d^3). Martin Leu falls in love with Wendelgard himself and marries her (e^3).

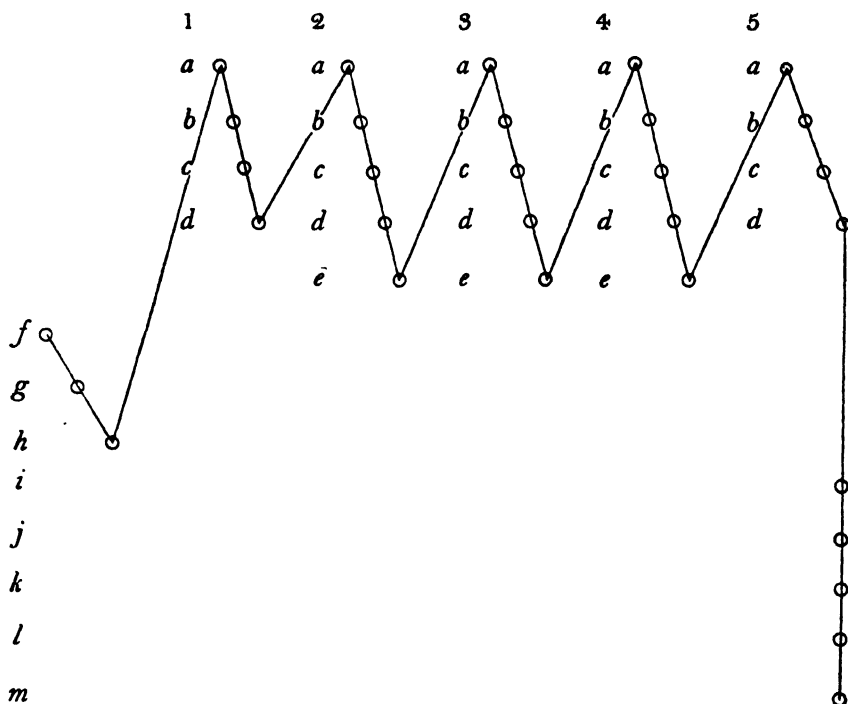
4. *The story of Grasmücke (Barbara Thumeysen)*. Barbara has a talent for painting birds, flowers and such things. Landolt is asked to teach her how to paint a horse, and during the lessons which drag on longer than is necessary he falls in love with her (a^4). The two families come to an agreement and Barbara visits Landolt's parents, where she is shown his studio and is alarmed at

the anatomical figures, and the uncompromising reproductions of nature (b^4). She demands to be taken home (c^4). The next morning she requires, as a condition of her marriage to Landolt, that he shall give up painting (d^4). This he refuses to do, recognizing in the demand a certain unjustified assumption (e^4).

5. *The story of Amsel (Aglaia)*. Landolt and Aglaia become friends at a vintage feast (a^5). In the course of a ride together Aglaia gives him encouragement to believe that she loves him. He writes a letter proposing marriage to her and receives an answer inviting him to a walk the following day (b^5). Aglaia then informs him that she loves and is loved by a protestant priest of whom her parents do not approve and has turned to Landolt for help (c^5). Landolt succeeds in overcoming the difficulties which prevent her marriage with the man she loves (d^5).

The five ladies appear at the castle of the Landvogt and are made acquainted with one another and the house-keeper (i). As entertainment they are allowed to be present whilst the Landvogt fulfils his duties as a magistrate and passes judgment on various wrongdoers who are brought up before him (j). After dinner the Landvogt informs them that he has called them together in order that they may decide for him, since he has come to the conclusion that he must now at last take a wife, whether he shall marry his housekeeper or the maid who waited upon them at table, and leaves the room in order that they may discuss the problem without embarrassment (k). They decide by three votes to two that he should marry the young maid, whereupon it is revealed that she is merely a boy in disguise and Landolt declares that he will remain a bachelor (l), which he does until his death thirty years later (m).

The scheme of this *Novelle* is very complicated because it is in effect a framework *Novelle* containing the story of five separate persons treated separately—the connecting link between them all being the hero Landolt. (In addition to these five main characters a number of subsidiary characters have their life stories related as well.) I have



therefore used a double notation of letters and figures; and though the five series are printed on the same level it must be assumed from internal evidence that each story takes place a little later in time than the one preceding it. The incidents related are very slight and the real charm of the work lies in the pictures of a number of entertaining people, together with the curious and detailed description of circumstances which is characteristic of Keller's art.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Reference may also be made to two more modern attempts to distinguish between the Novelle and the short story (*Kurzgeschichte*): Walther Vark, *Die Form in der Novelle*, Jena Dissertation, 1980; Felix Langer, *Die Kurzgeschichte*, Lit. 32, p. 613 f.

2. See Karl Viëtor, *Geschichte der deutschen Ode*, Munich, 1923, Introduction.

CHAPTER I

1. See Karl Viëtor, *Geschichte der deutschen Ode*, Introduction.

2. For an interesting instance of an anecdote which at a first hearing seemed to be 'the very subject for a short story' and proved ultimately unsuitable see Paul Ernst, *Der Weg zur Form*, Berlin, 1928, chapter entitled 'Ein Novellenstoff'.

3. E. Hirt, *Das Formgesetz der epischen, dramatischen und lyrischen Dichtung*, Leipzig, 1923, p. 12.

4. Georg von Lukács, *Die Seele und die Formen*, Berlin, 1911, p. 158.

5. In the continuation of chapter 7, book 5 of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* already cited, Goethe contrasts the importance of fate in the drama with that of chance in the novel and adds that chance may be allowed to bring about pathetic but never tragic situations. In this connection it is worth recording that in the majority of Novellen with unhappy endings the effect is rather pathetic than tragic. See in this connection Chapter VIII.

6. Friedrich Gundolf, *Goethe*, Berlin, 1916, p. 743.

7. Goethe an Staatsrat Schultz am 10 Januar, 1829.

8. Conrad Ferdinand Meyer to Félix Bovet, 14 January, 1888.

9. Friedrich Schlegel, *Jugendwerke*, ed. Jakob Minor, Vienna, 1882. Nachrichten von den poetischen Werken des Johannes Boccaccio.

10. Similar ideas, characteristic of the Romantic conception of the genre, are expressed by Schelling in his *Philosophie der Kunst*: 'Die Novelle... ist der Roman nach der lyrischen Seite gebildet, gleichsam, was die Elegie in bezug auf das Epos ist, eine Geschichte zur symbolischen Darstellung eines subjektiven Zustandes oder einer

besonderen Wahrheit, eines eigentümlichen Gefühls'. Quoted in *Deutsche Literatur*, Reihe Romantik, Kunstanschauung der Romantik, p. 268.

11. Goethe to Eckermann, 29 January, 1827.
12. *Don Sylvio de Rosalva*, Ausgabe von 1772, vol. I, p. 22.
13. Schleiermacher, *Vertr. Briefe*, p. 432.
14. Ernst, *op. cit.* p. 288.
15. Ludwig Tieck, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. XI, p. lxxxv.
16. Friedrich Hebbel, *Werke*, ed. R. M. Werner, vol. VII, p. 228.
17. Paul Heyse, *Jugenderinnerungen und Bekenntnisse*, Stuttgart und Berlin, 1912, 5th ed. vol. II, p. 68.
18. Heyse und Kurz, *Deutscher Novellenschatz*, vol. I, Introduction.
19. Fr. Spielhagen, *Neue Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik der Epik und Dramatik*, 1898, p. 74. See also the same author's *Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans*, 1883, p. 245.
20. Fr. Spielhagen, *Neue Beiträge*, p. 74.
21. As a result of his investigations into the specific character of the Novelle as a genre Hirsch arrives at the following general definition: 'Der Novelle eigentümlich ist, dass sie das Subjektive in artistischer Formgebung verhüllt, dass diese Stilisierung der Ordnung und Fülle der Welt zu einer Beschränkung auf eine Situation und zur Wahl von ungewöhnlichen Geschehnissen führt'. Arnold Hirsch, *Der Gattungsbegriff 'Novelle'* (Germanische Studien, Heft 64, Berlin, 1928), p. 147.

CHAPTER II

1. Wieland, *Don Sylvio di Rosalva*, Ausgabe von 1772, vol. I, p. 22.
2. Goethe to Eckermann, 18 January, 1827.
3. The short stories of Wieland collected under the title *Das Hexameron von Rosenhain*, an uncompleted attempt at a framework Novelle on a large scale, may be included under the type of Classical Novelle. They are however intrinsically of little merit and without profundity of thought or artistry of composition. One of the stories, *Liebe und Freundschaft auf der Dauer*, deals with the same subject as Goethe's novel: *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. It is, however, characteristic of Wieland that he does not perceive the ethical problem involved.

CHAPTER III

1. Emil Ermatinger, *Das dichterische Kunstwerk*, Berlin, 1921.
2. The extent to which the character of the Novelle has already changed can be estimated if the point of view of A. von Grolman be accepted: 'Es berührt diese Dinge nahe, wenn festgehalten wird, dass die altitalienische Novelle eine absolut diesseitige unmetaphysisch gerichtete und in jedem Sinne gesellschaftliche Kunstform sei'. Adolf von Grolman, 'Die strenge Novellenform und die Problematik ihrer Zertrümmerung', *Zeitung für Deutschkunde*, 1929, p. 625.

CHAPTER IV

1. Hermann Pongs, 'Grundlagen der deutschen Novellendichtung im 19 Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch des Frankfurter Deutschen Hochstifts*.
2. Ludwig Tieck, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vorbericht zur ersten Lieferung, 1828.
3. Ricarda Huch, *Die Romantik, Ausbreitung und Verfall*, Leipzig, 1908, p. 204.
4. Huch, *op. cit.* p. 207.
5. Paul Ernst, *Der Weg zur Form*, p. 75.
6. See Chapter VI.

CHAPTER V

1. Friedrich Schlegel, *Jugendwerke*, vol. II, p. 412.
2. Complete works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, translated by N. Maccoll, Glasgow, 1902, vol. VII, p. 6.
3. In view of this categorical statement of Cervantes himself the opinion of Hermann Pongs that the term 'ejemplares' is used 'in dem Sinn, dass hier exempla, Urbilder des Menschlichen aufgestellt werden, auf eine bestimmte Idee hin geformt' ('Grundlagen der deutschen Novellendichtung im 19 Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch des Frankfurter Deutschen Hochstifts*) seems to be untenable. Cervantes does not use the attribute 'exemplary' of his characters, but of his stories themselves. It is however true that the characters are set in a society which has a definite form of its own, that of Renaissance Spain as controlled by the authority of the Catholic Church.
4. *Las Novelas Ejemplares de Cervantes*, por Francisco A. de Icaza, Segunda edicion, Madrid, 1915, p. 208.

5. Icaza, *op. cit.* p. 168.
6. Icaza, *op. cit.* p. 220.
7. J. J. Bertrand, *Cervantes et le Romantisme allemand*, Paris, 1914, p. 482.
8. Bertrand, *op. cit.* p. 484.
9. Bertrand, *op. cit.* p. 490.
10. Ludwig Tieck, *Gesammelte Werke*, Berlin, 1829, vol. XI, pp. lxxxvii, lxxxviii.
11. Peter Kimmerich, *Ludwig Tieck als Novellendichter*, 1921.
12. Jakob Minor, *Tieck als Novellendichter*, Akademische Blätter, 1884.
13. *Die Vogelscheuche* is described as 'Novelle in fünf Aufzügen'.
14. Heinrich Laube, *Moderne Charakteristiken*, 11 Band, Mannheim, 1835, p. 407.
15. See Arnold Hirsch, *Der Gattungsbegriff 'Novelle'* (Germanische Studien, Heft 64), p. 49.
16. Theodor Mundt, *Moderne Lebenswirren*, Leipzig, 1840, pp. 155 ff.
17. Theodor Mundt, *Geschichte der Literatur der Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1842, p. 229.
18. Quoted by Hirsch, *op. cit.* p. 51.
19. Quoted by J. Proelss, *Das junge Deutschland*, Stuttgart, 1892, p. 550.
20. Heinrich Laube, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. H. H. Houben, Leipzig, 1908, vol. VII, p. 105.
21. See Chapter VI for an account of its development.
22. Karl Gutzkow, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. H. H. Houben, Leipzig (no date), vol. VI, pp. 102-3.

CHAPTER VI

1. Quoted by F. Altvater, *Wesen und Form der deutschen Volksgeschichte im 19 Jahrhundert* (Germanische Studien, No. 88), p. 43. I have drawn largely upon Altvater's excellent study of the German village story for this chapter.
2. Emil Ermatinger, *Das dichterische Kunstwerk*, p. 61.
3. Quoted by Altvater, *op. cit.* p. 123.

CHAPTER VII

1. *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, Merker-Stammler, Article entitled 'Poetischer Realismus'.

2. As an example: *Das Novellenbuch, oder Hundert Novellen nach alten italienischen, spanischen, französischen, lateinischen, englischen und deutschen bearbeitet*, von Eduard von Bülow, 4 vols. Leipzig, 1834. In the 'Vorwort' contributed by Tieck reference is made to the extraordinary popularity of the Novelle at the time.

3. Adalbert Stifter, *Bunte Steine*, Vorrede (written in 1852).

4. Stifter, *op. cit.*

5. Quoted by Arnold Hirsch, *Der Gattungsbegriff 'Novelle'* (Germanische Studien, Heft 64), p. 37.

6. See Käti Friedemann, *Die Rolle des Erzählers in der Epik*, Leipzig, 1910.

7. See Appendix for Analysis of narrative in other Novellen.

8. An interesting comparison is that between Grillparzer's Novelle and Theodor Storm's *Ein stiller Musikant*. Storm's presentation of his principal character is far more sentimental.

9. *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, Article 'Novelle'. The author of the article, Adolf von Grolman, is amongst contemporary writers on the Novelle one of the greatest purists in the matter of form.

10. Albert Köster, *Briefwechsel zwischen Keller und Storm*. Letter to Keller of the 14 August, 1881.

11. See Chapter VIII: The Novelle as a substitute for Tragedy.

12. Quoted in the introduction to Storm's Novellen by Felix Lorenz, edition published by Bongs and Co.

13. Georg von Lukács, *Die Seele und die Formen*, p. 138.

14. Emil Ermatinger, *Das dichterische Kunstwerk*, p. 114.

15. Ermatinger, *op. cit.*

16. Letter of Keller to Emil Kuh, 12 February, 1874.

17. Letter of Keller to Theodor Storm, August, 1881.

18. See Keller's own criticism of *Das verlorene Lachen* in a letter to Vischer, 29 June, 1875: 'Ich glaube, der Hauptfehler liegt darin, dass es eigentlich ein kleiner Romanstoff ist, der novellistisch nicht wohl abgewandelt werden kann. Daher vieles deduzierend und resumierend vorgetragen werden musste, anstatt dass es sich anekdotisch geschehend abspinnt, daher der tendenziöse, langweilige Anstrich'.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Quoted in Korff-Linden, *Aufriss der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1932, p. 180.

2. See Oskar F. Walzel, *Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit*, Leipzig, 1922. Essay entitled 'Tragik nach Schopenhauer und von Heute'.

3. An exception may possibly be made for the principal character in Kleist's *Der Findling*.

4. Bernard Bruch, 'Novelle und Tragödie: Zwei Kunstformen und Weltanschauungen', *Zeitung für Aesthetik*, 1928, p. 329: 'Der Novelle ist der Bereich des Tragischen grundsätzlich verschlossen'.

5. Hermann Pongs, 'Möglichkeiten des Tragischen in der Novelle', *Jahrbuch der Kleistgesellschaft*, 1931-2. Pongs bases his claim that the Novelle is capable of tragedy on the conception of tragedy of Max Scheler.

6. See also Lessing's introduction to the translation of Thomson's tragedies: 'Und nur diese Tränen des Mitleids und der sich fühlenden Menschlichkeit sind die Absicht des Trauerspiels oder es kann gar keine haben'.

7. A similar situation, but reversed—the woman, not the man, bestows embraces upon a mistakenly recognized lover—occurs in the Novelle by Rudolf Binding (*Die Waffenbrüder*) which has not a conciliatory but a tragic ending. The situation in this as in Binding's sentimental and greatly overrated Novelle *Der Opfergang* is too 'konstruiert' to be convincing.

8. Paul Heyse, *Novellenschatz*, vol. xxi, Introduction to *Die Marzipanliese*.

9. Kenneth Hayens in his study of Theodor Fontane insists that these three works are novels. There would be more justification for claiming some of the shorter novels of Fontane, at least as far as their construction is concerned, as Novellen.

CHAPTER IX

1. 'Paul Heyses Novellen', *Auswahl für das Haus*, 3 vols. published by Cotta, Stuttgart and Berlin (no date).

2. Emil Ermatinger, *Das dichterische Kunstwerk*, p. 136.

3. Quoted by Georg von Lukács, *Die Seele und die Formen*, p. 128.

4. Compare Georg Brandes, *Moderne Geister*, 4th ed. Frankfurt, 1901. Essay on Paul Heyse (written in 1875). 'Nicht als Naturforscher, sondern als Schönheitsanbeter betrachtet Heyse das bunte Treiben des Lebens.'

5. Hans Bracher, *Rahmenerzählung und Verwandtes bei Keller, Meyer, Storm*, Leipzig, 1909.

6. Otto Kraus, *Paul Heyses Novellen und Romane*, Frankfurt a/M. 1888.

7. Otto Kraus, *Die deutsche Literatur und die Unsittlichkeit*. Quoted in *Paul Heyse* by Victor Klemperer, Berlin, 1907, p. 17.

8. Brandes concludes his essay on Paul Heyse thus: 'Man kann, sagte ein Kritiker, Paul Heyse als der Mendelssohn-Bartholdy der deutschen Poesie definieren. Er erscheint wie Mendelssohn nach den grossen Meistern. Sein Wesen ist wie dasjenige Mendelssohns ein deutsches lyrisches und sinniges Naturell mit der feinsten süd-ländischen Bildung durchdrungen. Beiden fehlt der grosse Pathos, die durchgreifende Gewalt, der Sturm des dramatischen Elements; aber beide haben natürliche Würde im Ernst, reizende Liebens-würdigkeit und Anmut in Scherz; beide sind sie durchgebildet in der Form, Virtuosen in der Ausführung'.

9. *Briefe C. F. Meyers*, herausgegeben von Adolf Frey, Leipzig, 1908, vol. II, p. 340.

10. A writer of Novellen who approaches his historical subject matter from a point of view diametrically opposed to that of Meyer is Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, the author of a *Naturgeschichte des deutschen Volkes*. In his *Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen* (1856) he presents incidents from the lives of unimportant but typical characters whose experiences and adventures are intended to illustrate the cultural conditions of past ages of German history. The stories, which hardly justify the title Novellen, are pleasantly told, but belong in intention and achievement to the type of fiction which the 'Professorenroman' of Dahn and Ebers made popular. More akin to the 'Renaissancismus' of Meyer are the romantic-historical Novellen of Isolde Kurz, whose *Florentiner Novellen* (1890) and *Italienische Novellen* (1895) went into numerous editions. Though she does not possess the firmness and sculptural quality of Meyer, her stories give a vivid and colourful picture of Renaissance Italy.

11. Letter to Félix Bovet, 14 January, 1888. The statement of Meyer was called forth by the following criticism of his work which appeared in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*: 'Aussi bien il semble fait pour le roman historique. Sa connaissance approfondie des sources de l'histoire, son talent incomparable du narrateur, se prêtent admirablement à faire revivre les figures du passé'.

12. See F. F. Baumgarten, *Das Werk Conrad Ferdinand Meyers, Renaissance Empfinden und Stilkunst*, Munich, 1920. I have drawn upon Baumgarten's book in my estimate of Meyer's personality and work.

13. Lukačs, *op. cit.* p. 137.

CHAPTER X

1. See Chapter VIII: The Novelle as a substitute for Tragedy. This view of the ethos of the Novelle is put forward by Bernard Bruch, 'Novelle und Tragödie: Zwei Kunstformen und Weltanschauungen', *Zeitung für Aesthetik*, 1928.

2. Oskar F. Walzel, *Vom Geistesleben des 18 und 19 Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1911, pp. 458, 459.

3. Unlike her contemporary Ossip Schubin (Lola Kirschner), who was at one time her rival in popularity: a more temperamental writer with a more highly coloured style. Her novels and Novellen (*Dolorata*, *Etiquette*, *Mal' Occhio*) are now forgotten.

4. See the first paragraph in his Novelle *Die Geigerin*.

5. I have not cited instances from Saar's later collections of Novellen because they repeat, frequently in less effective form, the themes of the earlier Novellen. They deal for preference with characters who are weak and unable to cope with the demands which life makes upon them (*Doktor Trojan*, *Conte Gasparo*, *Sappho*) or are actually vicious (*Die Brüder*, *Ninon*, *Requiem der Liebe*) and often describe the collapse of a personality in contact with an unworthy woman.

6. Frank's story traces the cause of the murder of a schoolmaster by a former pupil to an inferiority complex which the master's contemptuous treatment of the boy had set up.

7. Hesse has lately republished from *Nachbarn* and *Umwege* the stories which he thinks worthy to find a place in his collected works in a volume entitled *Kleine Welt*, 1933.

8. Richard Specht, *Arthur Schnitzler, der Dichter und sein Werk*, Berlin, 1922, p. 70.

9. For instance in the following Novellen: *Die Toten schweigen*, *Frau Berta Garlan*, *Das neue Lied*, *Der Tod des Junggesellen*, *Der Mörder*, *Dr Gräsler*, *Badearzt*, *Casanovas Heimfahrt*; and among the plays: *Die letzten Masken*, *Komtesse Mizzi*, *Das Vermächtnis*, *Das weite Land*. As an object of curiosity the following passage from Specht's book describing his reactions to one of the characters in Schnitzler's plays is recorded here. The passage refers to Hofreiter, the principal character in *Das weite Land*, easily the most despicable and egoistic of Schnitzler's characters, but one for whom he obviously wishes to arouse a certain amount of comprehension and sympathy: 'Ich habe mich oft gefragt, was es denn sei, dass Werke wie dieses, gegen dessen Gestalten und gegen deren Haltung man sich auflehnt, deren Tun und deren Selbstkommentierung einem

grenzenlos zuwider sind, trotzdem (auf mich wenigstens) einen solchen unentrinnbaren Reiz ausüben. Zunächst ist es ja gewiss dies: dass Schnitzler auch Menschen wie Hofreiter mit seinem ganzen verführerischen Geist beschenkt, dass er ihnen nicht nur bezwingende Eleganz des Betragens und ein ravissantes Parfüm mondäner luxuriöser Verwöhntheit gibt, sondern...'. Spécht, *op. cit.* pp. 314, 315.

10. Gerhart Hauptmann's Novelle *Der Ketzer von Soana* (1918)—a work of very great imaginative beauty, with the theme similar to that of Storm's *Renate* and Raabe's *Else von der Tanne*, of a young priest infatuated by the beauty of a girl who lives as an outcast from society—receives a sudden symbolical twist in the last few pages, which shifts its significance on to another plane of ideas.

CONCLUSION

1. Adolf von Grolman, in his essay 'Die strenge Novellenform und die Problematik ihrer Zertrümmerung' (*Zeitung für Deutschland*, 1929, p. 619), writes: 'Es fehlt seit 1789 die "Gesellschaft" von der unerlässlichen Voraussetzung eines geschlossenen Weltbildes ganz zu schweigen. Aber aus Gesellschaft kommt, zur feinen Gesellschaft und ihrer Geselligkeit drängt die echte "Novelle"; in ihr hat sie Wurzel, aus ihr stammt das "man", von dem erzählt wird und an das—nur an das!—die so gebildete Novelle sich allein wendet; man kennt sich und seinen Lebensstil, "man" gehört zu einander und ist nur dadurch in der Lage, die geheimen Zwischentöne aller echten Novellistik zu goutieren...'.
 Grolman is concerned with the 'strict' form of the Novelle and accepts the Romance Novelle as the standard. Whilst agreeing with his views with regard to the relation of the Novelle to an established form of society in principle, I have accepted a form of society less 'fein' than his as the standard for the German Novelle, compared with which the 'strict' Romance form is bürgerlich-aristokratisch in its social background rather than purely bürgerlich.

2. Compare Grolman, *op. cit.* p. 625: 'Was aber die Nachbildungen des strengen "Novellen"stils anlangt, so können sie heutzutage fast nur noch resignierendem Kunstwillen entstammen, der trotz pointierter Anmut und geraffter Formbewusstheit wesentlich Modernes nicht mehr aussagt und das Eigentliche modernen Seins nicht erreicht'.

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